



# Helen de Tournon:

A NOVEL.

BY

MADAME DE SOUZA.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

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## HELEN DE TOURNON.

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MADAME de Tournon, descended from one of the most illustrious families in France, was related to Catherine de' Medici, who appointed her lady of honour to Marguerite de Valois, on the marriage of that princess to the king of Navarre. The haughtiness of her character, and the austere reserve of her manners seemed to operate as a practical criticism on the court, where, by her



office, she was obliged to reside. She was therefore but little beloved. All extolled her courage, and the heroism with which she had twice defended her town of Tournon against the Protestants, and obliged them to raise the siege. But the courtiers took pleasure in designating her as the *rude and terrible lady*, a name which had been sportively conferred on her by the young and beautiful queen of Navarre.

The family of Madame de Tournon never approached her without trembling. She permitted no opposition: she could not brook even an explanation. Hence, without consulting her eldest daughter's wishes, she gave her in marriage to

Monsieur de Balançon, whom the king had appointed governor of the county of Burgundy.

Madame de Tournon had not, perhaps, sufficiently enquired into the character of a man who, she well knew, enjoyed a good reputation and a large fortune. She was not aware that he was selfish, harsh towards his servants, cold and tyrannical towards his relatives. As he had never been detected in any sin against decorum, or in any of those aberrations of youth which excite painful forebodings, he had succeeded in gaining general esteem, and no one suspected that he was already tainted with the vices incident to an advanced season of life.

By mere observance of the minor social duties, Monsieur de Balançon had caused every one of his faults to be set down as a virtue. His avarice was called economy ; his falsehood was regarded as prudence ; he was a living evidence of a truth which is to be learned by long observation of the world, — that youth, with a little seriousness, wins respect and inspires confidence ; just as old men, by seeming at times indulgent and tractable, gain a reputation for goodness, however self-willed they may be in reality.

Madame de Tournon had given the preference to Monsieur de Balançon merely because he was a stranger. Proof against the weak-

nèsses of maternal love, she betrayed no insensibility on parting with her daughter, and was only alive to the satisfaction of seeing her withdrawn from the dangers of the court of Catherine.

The marriage of Madame de Balançon was celebrated at the Louvre, in the presence of the king, and the queens. She very soon afterwards foresaw all that she should have to suffer from the disposition of her husband. Terrified at the thought of going to a strange country, and of living comfortless amidst a family unknown to her, she prayed her mother that she might be accompanied by her younger sister.

Helen de Tournon had just completed her sixteenth year; she had been educated at the house of her mother; had never appeared at court, and had lived almost secluded from the world. Madame de Tournon, pleased at the opportunity of sending away both her daughters from France at the same time, without any risk of giving offence to Catherine, consented to Helen's departure.

The sisters, happy in each other's society, set out for the Netherlands. On their arrival the festivals given in honour of Madame de Balançon delighted Helen, and excited in her a pleasing surprise which strongly

prepossessed her in favour of her new abode.

Yet the severe precepts of Madame de Tournon remained engraven on her mind, but their rigour was tempered by extreme gentleness of disposition. The enlightened education she had received, and the solitude in which she had passed her early years, rendered her distrustful both of the world, which was unknown to her, and of her own inexperience, which she both felt and owned.

A kind of timid reserve governed all her movements and gave them an inexpressible charm. It was only with persons in affliction that she recovered that youth of the heart, which believes in all the ills that

are confided to it; on such occasions her naturally gentle mien expanded into benevolence; all her words were soothing, and her sympathy won the confidence of the wretched.

After passing some days amidst festivities so flattering to his pride, Monsieur de Balançon took his young wife to a very fine estate which he possessed near Namur. They were accompanied by Mademoiselle de Tournon.

Leopold, Monsieur de Balançon's third brother, was waiting their arrival at the chateau. This was the first year of his youthful freedom, and in the ecstacy of independence, he had relinquished his studies for

the pleasures of the chase, an amusement to which he passionately addicted himself. The arrival of Madame de Balançon occasioned no change in his way of life. He saw little of the family, as he seldom returned home until evening, when he addressed to Helen a few insignificant phrases which left no impression on her mind, and, after a word of regard to his brother, and of respect to his sister-in-law, disappeared until next day at the same hour. Thus, after a residence of several weeks under the same roof, he and Helen acquired that kind of familiarity which is formed between persons who are accustomed to meet in



society, yet remain perfect strangers to each other.

Monsieur de Balançon being older than his brothers, claimed the right of directing their conduct, and assumed over them the authority of a father. He was grieved at the heedless dissipated life which Leopold led. One evening, when seated with his wife and sister-in-law, he complained of it bitterly, "It must be confessed," said he, "I am not fortunate in brothers. Leopold is a madcap, who may be expected to become reasonable in time; but the Marquis de Varambon, with his severe solemnity, is still more foolish than he. Yet the marquis values

himself highly because he has only serious follies."

This remark appeared so singular to Madame Balançon, that she desired her husband to explain it, and he did so the more readily, because he loved to be listened to. — "That you may comprehend my meaning," said he, "I must revert to the time when we were both children, and make you acquainted with my family.

"My mother had two brothers. According to usage, all the family property was possessed by the elder; the younger had been destined for the church. This elder brother died a short time after his sister was married to my father. His fortune

therefore devolved on his younger brother, who, fortunately for us, had already taken holy orders. When he had attained the electorate of Treves, he was pleased to declare repeatedly that he regarded us as his heirs.

“ My mother, on her death-bed, commended to the care of my uncle, my second brother, Augustus, now Marquis of Varambon. The Elector of Treves wished to dispose of him as if he had been his own son. My father was weak enough to consent to this, and one fine day, the child went away with his new protector ; we remained with my father. But from that time, my uncle regarded Leopold and myself, as inconvenient

collaterals to my brother, for whom his immense fortune was reserved, and to whom he granted a considerable annuity. Augustus, far from practising economy to augment the patrimony of the family, lavished all that my uncle gave him in pretended acts of beneficence. That I may call his first serious folly.

“The Elector has had him educated to qualify him for his coadjutor and successor. Yet, when Mr. Augustus attained his twentieth year, he not only refused to take holy orders, but positively rejected the ecclesiastical habit, declaring that he would not submit to my father’s will and my uncle’s wishes, until he should be twenty-five years of age.

This is what I call a second serious folly ; for in the interval the Elector may die, and my worthy brother may be left with all those pretty phrases with which he edifies us ; ‘ not to consent to enter on a profession, until he shall be well acquainted with its duties ; not to sacrifice his independence and liberty, until he shall be well assured that his regret will not be stronger than his reason.’

“ While he persists in refusing to secure the advantages of his situation, and to assume the habit, which would at least prove that he destines himself for the church, my very dear brother leads the severe and secluded life which it prescribes ;

that, again, I deem a folly so serious that it makes me laugh. Augustus seems to me like a man on the brink of a precipice, who dares neither leap headlong, nor withdraw. There he stands ; contemplating the abyss, unable either to absolve himself from the oaths which he made to my dying father, or to stifle the voice of gratitude which calls on him not to afflict an uncle to whom he owes every thing."

"And what says the Elector of his delay, of his hesitation?" enquired Madame de Balançon. "My uncle has an inconceivable fondness for my brother. Besides he is grieved at having made him unhappy in his infancy, by confiding him to

the care of a man whose talents were well known to him, but whose disposition he had not sufficiently examined. My uncle is almost as sentimental as his dear nephew. Yet be assured that Augustus will at length summon resolution for the great effort of accepting an office so brilliant as to excite the envy of the world.

“ Though I am three years older than he, and though my father delegated to me all his authority over my brothers, the independent situation in which Monsieur de Varambon is placed, obliges me to use conciliatory measures, which, in other circumstances, I should not practise. He writes to me that he is coming hither

to be introduced to you ; I recommend you, therefore, to endeavour to captivate his friendship."

The expression " to captivate his friendship," gave equal pain to both sisters. They looked at each other, and Madame de Balancon answered, " I shall endeavour to deserve it." " That is very well," replied her husband ; " but since there are cases in which we do not always obtain what we deserve, I beg that all your cares may be employed to make my brother pleased with his visit, and so pleased that he may consider my house as his own. This may one day or other be of great use ; for I have no doubt that he will be appointed my uncle's coadjutor." Monsieur de



Balançon then detailed the hopes which he had conceived from his brother's fortune, hopes which in every way implied personal advantages towards himself, and sacrifices on the part of Monsieur de Varambon.

Helen, who sat silently at work by the side of her sister, felt indignant at the selfishness of her brother-in-law, and could not help saying, "But how if Monsieur de Varambon felt an invincible repugnance?" "My brother were indeed much to be pitied!" replied Monsieur de Balançon. "To change a wretched patrimony for an immense fortune! To become the sovereign of a state, which, in the existing posture of ecclesiastical affairs, must give him a

great preponderance in Germany! Really, this does excite compassion! Besides, my uncle was my mother's second brother; he, like Augustus, was destined for holy orders; and an useful, honourable example becomes, in great families, the rule and duty of succeeding generations. Should heaven grant me children, my second son shall likewise be consecrated to the church."

Some days afterwards, Helen remarked an extraordinary bustle in the chateau. Every countenance wore a look of satisfaction which seemed unusual. The servants seemed to be preparing for a holiday; their agitation pleased her. Hitherto she had observed in them

the regularity which is produced by fear, not the zeal which is inspired by attachment. Their discourse awakened her curiosity. "He is so generous," said one; "so good, for all his gravity," said another; "he *enquires into and relieves distress*, which none would dare mention to him," said a third.

"Then he is very different from both his brothers," thought Helen. "The elder thinks only of his own interests, and is always concerned about futurity; the other is a wild-*ing*, who, if he fears no ills himself, hardly cares whether any one is wretched."

In crossing the vestibule of the chateau to go into the park, Made-

moiselle de Tournon observed preparations going forward in an apartment on the ground-floor, which had hitherto been shut up. The doors and windows were all open; and several domestics were at work within. To add to her surprise, she saw in the vestibule an old nurse, who had attended M. de Balançon and his brothers. She had seldom been used to quit her chamber, but now she was seated with a basket of flowers before her. She appeared to be waiting until they should have put in order the apartment, that she might go in. This respectable woman had managed the household of her masters for forty years. There was a natural dignity in her manners,

which, united with much goodness of her heart, won the respect of all the servants. The people of the village and of the castle, old and young, loved to pay their greetings to Dame Genevieve.

Helen, struck by her holiday appearance, and her basket of flowers, said, with a gracious smile, "So, dame Genevieve, for whom are all these preparations?" She answered with a profound reverence, "My young lady cannot but know that it was I who nursed the three brothers; but Monsieur de Varambon is he whom I always preferred. Formerly I used to blame myself for it, but I have since found that my heart did not mislead me." — "Yet it is

wrong," replied Helen, with the artless and tender air of a child that is playfully finding fault, "it is very wrong to have these preferences." "Oh," replied Genevieve, "it is he who takes care of my old age; the the other two scarcely know I am alive; but he enquires after me, and sends me little presents, which shew that he has not forgot what used to please me when he was a child. So I love him as I loved his mother."

Helen bade Genevieve resume her chair, and sat down beside her. Then the old woman said to her, timourously, "Would you like to see the family portraits? They are all here. Up stairs they have had themselves painted at full length, in fine uni-

forms laced with gold ; here respect is paid to father and mother. What brings them to remembrance is religiously preserved." She rose, and Mademoiselle de Tournon very willingly followed.

Dame Genevieve led her first into an extensive library lighted by three windows opening on a lonely wood, which rendered the place a sort of retreat, secluded from the chateau.

A numerous collection of books in dark coloured bindings formed its sole ornament. The furniture was of black velvet without any embroidery.

This stern simplicity presented a singular contrast to the flowers carried by dame Genevieve. Helen noticed it to her conductress. — " I

know it," replied she, in a tone which bespoke some little displeasure ; " I know it ; but a taste for flowers is the only one which my dear Augustus allows himself to retain ; his mother loved them so much ! he was surrounded with them in his infancy. Perhaps, were I to consult him, he would not choose to have such a profusion of them about him. But I am very sure he will not refuse those which his old nurse takes a pleasure in presenting to him."

Helen enquired if Monsieur de Varambon had superintended the furnishing of the library. " No, it was his uncle, the Elector of Treves. Madame de Balançon had consecrated this apartment for his sole



use. But as he has not been here for a very long time, he has ordered it to be given to that nephew whom he regards as his successor and his heir."

She conducted *Helen* to a saloon adjoining the library, and taking her by the hand, placed her before the portrait of a woman exquisitely beautiful. "This is my lady; my very good and dear mistress," said *Genevieve*; "there she is, as she ever was, surrounded with flowers." In fact the painter had represented her near a table on which appeared an alabaster vase filled with flowers, and environed with a wreath of roses. Pointing to a table that stood in the middle of the saloon, *Genevieve* said,

“ There is the alabaster vase, there is the table, which served as the painter’s models ; but the flowers and my lady are no more !” Helen enquired if the vase was held dear by Monsieur de Varambon. “ All that my lady delighted in is precious to him.”

Helen began to place flowers in the vase ; she tried to arrange them as she saw them disposed in the picture ; she then commenced the wreath. Dame Genevieve manifested a kind of pleasure on seeing her thus occupied ; but suddenly recollecting herself, she said, “ Are you not afraid that this imitation may give him more pain than pleasure ?” “ You are very right,” re-

plied Helen; "to recall an irreparable loss is to renew sorrow." As if alarmed at the idea, she dropt upon the table what remained of the flowers, left the garland half finished, and rising from her chair, stood musing on a picture in which were blended the images of youth, beauty, flowers, and death. She was pursuing her melancholy reverie, when an exclamation which escaped Genevieve, recalled her to herself. She was transfixed with astonishment on beholding Monsieur de Varambon by the side of the nurse, intently observing her. She knew him from his extreme resemblance to his mother. Overcome with embarrassment at being thus found by him in

his apartment, she became too confused to speak, and hastily withdrew. Her blushes, her timidity, her bashful flight, at once astonished and charmed Monsieur de Varambon. On glancing towards the table where her flowers lay scattered, he observed the wreath she had begun, and turning to the nurse, asked who was that young person. Instead of answering the question, Genevieve, fearing she had displeased him by admitting Mademoiselle de Tournon into his apartment, muttered some incoherent expressions: — “She followed me, — she was amusing herself with these flowers, — she is so charming!” Monsieur de Varambon approached the table, took the

wreath, and looked alternately at it and the picture. "May it be an homage as well as a remembrance!" said he, sighing, and he attached it to his mother's portrait.

Without making any other enquiry of Genevieve, he desired her to set all in order, while he went to his brother. Convinced that it was his sister-in-law whom he had seen, he could not easily account for the alarm which his presence had caused her. Yet he felt gratified in having found her contemplating his mother's portrait with a melancholy so profound. "She will be to me indeed a sister," thought he; "I shall at length have in my family one heart which will understand my own." That

he might more speedily rejoin her, he was hastily ascending the grand staircase of the chateau, when he met Madame de Balançon, who was coming to meet him. She was beautiful and agreeable; but this was not the young person whom he had just seen. They went together into the saloon.

After the customary compliments, Monsieur de Varambon was silent. He remembered at this moment that Mademoiselle de Tournon was here on a visit to her sister, and he flattered himself that it might be she whom he had seen. But how was it to be expected that so deep an interest could have been felt by

one who was a stranger in the family.

He was bewildering himself in these conjectures, when Monsieur de Balançon entered. After making some formal enquiries concerning him and his uncle, he began to make great complaints of Leopold. He testified especial displeasure at his not being present in the chateau to receive a brother to whom he owed so much, and on whom his fortune depended. "His friendship would be dear to me," replied Monsieur de Varambon, dryly, "but cold and calculating avidity would excite my aversion. His pleasures tend to nothing useful, it is true; but as there is nothing blameable in

them, let us leave him to seek happiness in his own way, without pretending to subject his tastes to our own."

Monsieur de Balançon felt that all these remarks were indirectly addressed to himself. Yet being resolved never to answer any thing but what it suited him to comprehend, he changed the conversation, and enquired of his wife, why Helen was not in the saloon. "I know not where she has passed the morning," was the reply; "I have scarcely seen her." Monsieur de Varambon mentally said, with suppressed exultation, "It is she; I have foreknown her." But though he was only in his twenty-second year, his secluded life, and serious



studies, had so habituated him to conceal his feelings, that he forebore to say that he believed he had seen her.

Dinner was announced. *Mademoiselle de Tournon* appeared. Her brother-in-law presented to her Monsieur de Varambon, who recognised her immediately. At this moment her beauty struck him with new admiration ; for on the former occasion he had but slightly observed her. He was still more deeply affected by her timid air, and, by those eyes, which dared not raise themselves towards him. Yet Helen's reserve commanded his own, and he contented himself with making a profound obeisance.

The dinner would have passed over in deep silence, had it not been for Monsieur de Balançon, who always spoke like one whom rank and office had accustomed to expect attentive auditors: his voice alone was heard.

Monsieur de Varambon thought of Helen with emotion. He pictured her still standing and contemplating the portrait of his mother — of that mother whom he had so tenderly loved. In his estimation it was a merit in her that she should have been in his apartment, when the person whom he might naturally have expected to see there was Madame de Balançon.

When the repast was finished, Helen retired. Her embarrassment, and the

visible surprise of her sister, led Monsieur de Varambon to infer, that they usually remained together, and that it was him whom she avoided. He secretly vowed never to tell her how deeply he had been affected by the regrets which he had seen her express for his mother ; he felt grateful that she sought to hide them with as much care as another would have taken to dissemble an error.

Almost a month elapsed, and he did not venture to cultivate a nearer acquaintance with Helen. This reserve re-assured her ; she resumed the artless candour of her years ; and if the presence of Monsieur de Varambon still occasioned her any emotion, it was that of gentle pity,

which his mournful and pensive air inspired.

Dame Genevieve had been much affected on seeing Mademoiselle de Tournon contemplate with so much interest the portrait of her late mistress. She became attached to that amiable person, and went every morning to see her. She had always some generous action of Monsieur de Varambon to relate. Helen remarked with pleasure that his handsome and noble person accorded well with his exalted mind. She attributed his seriousness to the state of life into which he was about to enter; and that reserve which he maintained, even in company, appeared rather like a virtue than a fault.

Yet she one day enquired of Genevieve, why Monsieur de Varambon appeared so melancholy. The old dame answered with a sigh, "There are family secrets which the masters think are not known to their people; and which are but too well known. Those who are truly attached, know and conceal them; those who are curious, find out and speak of them. I think I may trust you with ours, for other servants of the house have in some degree made them public.

"The Count de Balançon, the father of these gentlemen, made his lady very unhappy. He had all the faults which you see in his eldest son. I had been brought up with

Madame de Balançon, as her companion and playmate in childhood. Ever near her, it was easy for me to profit by the education which was given to her. I came with her to this place at the time of her marriage; I was her waiting-woman in public, her friend in solitude. I have, therefore, often seen her tears flow, and by my attachment have sometimes soothed her sorrows.

“She endured so many troubles from her husband’s temper, that she very soon discovered the bad qualities of her eldest son. We took pains to correct them; but we had to chide and punish him unknown to his father, whose image and idol he was. My Lady remarked with

great satisfaction of mind, that Augustus was the very reverse of his brother in disposition.

“ The elder was proud, avaricious, selfish, and hypocritical ; he pryed into our very thoughts ; he concealed all his own, and he never ceased complaining to his father of my Lady’s partiality to Augustus. Then Monsieur de Balançon came like a madman to quarrel with his wife ; he threatened to deprive me of the care of the children, if we continued to persecute his eldest son, who, as head of the family, had a claim to preference from all. ‘ He is the master,’ said the enraged father, ‘ he shall represent me, and his brothers shall be subject to him.’

Augustus, though as yet very young; revolted from such a notion.

“ My Lady, on the other hand, to console Augustus, lavished her caresses upon him, but waited, however, till she was alone with me, and till the little tyrant, the elder boy, was with his father. Augustus was well aware that his mother dared neither praise him nor embrace him before his brother, and there grew an inveterate hatred between the two children. Augustus was still more haughty and irascible than the elder; but he had, at least, a noble pride of soul. He was generous, violent, and passionate; he so loved, aye, adored his mother, that he was jealous of her affection, even to the



injury of his health, whenever my Lady spoke to her other children with more fondness than usual, or paid less attention to him.

“ Leopold, younger and more fortunate than his brothers, obtained the notice of both his parents, without becoming the object of an attachment so exclusive as to excite envy. But my Lady’s health declined. Incessantly tormented by the ill-humour of her husband, by the whim and self-will of her eldest son, and by the gloomy jealousy of her dear Augustus, it cost her more trouble than she could bear to preserve peace in her household. Yet she languished some years, but every day I saw her grow weaker and

fainter. When she knew her end approaching I heard her bewail herself to think how wretched her poor Augustus was about to become.

“ She made a will, by which she left him all that she could dispose of. This preference, perhaps excusable from her husband's predilection for the eldest son, was nevertheless unjust. The estate which Monsieur de Varambon possesses, came to him from my Lady. It is a resource ; but it is not a fortune for a man of his rank, and still less for a man of his generous temper, for he gives away all his income.

“ When his mother was dead, his father, more soured than ever by my Lady's last arrangements, never

saw this poor child without giving him a threatening look and heaping reproaches on him. I must confess that my poor Augustus seemed born to suffer. Whatever his brother did was right, while the smallest faults that he committed were punished with the utmost rigour. Almost every evening, he used to come crying to me, and I could not quiet him, except by promising to take him next day to pray and weep on the tomb of his mother.

“ A childhood so unhappy has quenched all the joy, all the gaiety of an age to which are usually attached the sweetest remembrances of life. The preference given to his elder brother has completed the

developement of that jealous disquietude, and that melancholy, which make him shrink from any attachment. He distrusts himself and every one else. This disposition makes no change in his conduct; it checks none of his charities; it does not alter his kindness; yet he suffers, and he does more harm to himself than his parents were able to do to him.

“The Elector was travelling at the time of my Lady’s death. He was not able to return until several months after we had lost her. From his presence I expected every thing; and the day after his arrival, I waited upon him ere any one was awake in the chateau. I was the bearer of a

letter which my Lady had charged me to deliver to him secretly. I knew that it disclosed to him her disquiet concerning her dear Augustus. She intreated the Elector to watch over the boy, and assured him of her blessing from heaven.

“ The Elector is pious and good ; I easily saw that he grieved at the injustice of his brother. At his desire I related to him all I have told you. He mused a long time, and asked me where was the chamber of his nephews ? I told him it was the same they occupied in the life-time of their mother. ‘ Ah ! ’ said he, sorrowfully, ‘ I shall be very glad to see it again ; return thither ; I will go soon, and you must pretend great surprise

in presence of the little elder brother, who, I see, is the real tyrant of this house.'

"I was busy serving up breakfast to these masters, when the Elector entered the room. He moved to me as if he had not seen me before. The eldest as well as Leopold went to meet the uncle with much apparent joy. Augustus remained in his place; my Lord approached him. 'How he resembles his mother! there are her large dark eyes; her noble air, and, I fear, her too sensitive soul.' He added, sighing, 'So young! he has already the reserve and the dignity' which misfortune gives!"

"The extreme beauty of Augus-

tus was one of the motives of his father's estrangement; for, when I took the children out to walk, people looked at none but him; spoke only to him; they even followed him; and of this his elder brother used always to come and make his complaints.

“ Like other people, the Elector attended only to Augustus; he seemed enraptured with his answers and his sentiments. I stood there, inwardly and heartily praying that my good mistress would inspire her son with all that he ought to say to please his uncle. The eldest seeing my Lord quite taken up with Augustus, disappeared, and I was apprehensive lest he should be gone to

apprize his father. I imparted my meaning to my lord without letting Leopold be the wiser.

“In fact, we soon beheld Monsieur de Balançon followed by his eldest son. He affected a smile; but it was easily seen how much he was dissatisfied. ‘Who could have brought you so early to weary yourself with these children?’ said Monsieur de Balançon to his brother. ‘I wished to revisit the chamber where I have so often seen my poor sister. Augustus’s resemblance to his mother much affected me.’

“Monsieur de Balançon could not hide his displeasure; and I stood there in silence, and seemingly unmoved.



“ ‘Why does not Augustus appear as gay and as happy as his brothers?’ asked my lord, ‘he appears to me already strikingly serious.’ ‘ ’Tis a shy child, of an intractable temper,’ said the father; ‘the sight of him disturbs the joy of the others, and impresses even me with painful feelings.’ ‘Ah!’ replied the Elector, an ill-directed education, frequently produces more faults than it corrects. I take charge of this child; we shall see whether I shall not renew youth in his heart.’

“ My poor Augustus took his uncle’s hand, and kissed it with the tenderest emotion. ‘Wilt thou love me dearly?’ said he. ‘I love you already,’ answered the child.

‘ But knowest thou that I shall raise thee to be a grave prelate, and shall make thee worthy of being my coadjutor ?’ Monsieur de Balançon interrupted his brother, to remind him that he had promised that place to Leopold. ‘ Ah! I won’t have it,’ cried the little boy, who was then as giddy as he has since remained; ‘ I had rather my uncle would give me a horse and a sword. His terrible long black gown frightens me.’ My lord amused himself with Leopold’s gaiety, manifested a lively interest in Augustus, and said not a word of that eldest brother, who even then shewed at this slight the resentment

of a man, though he was scarcely twelve years of age.

“ His father and his uncle went out together. I saw them walking in the garden, and conversing with much animation. I have since learned that Monsieur de Balançon at first declined the good prospect which opened for Augustus; but the Elector declared, that if they did not confide in him, he would fix his affections, and confer his benefits on a more distant relative. Monsieur de Balançon, alarmed by this menace, at length entrusted to him the fortune of his son.

“ They returned to the chamber where we staid. — ‘ Augustus,’ said his uncle, ‘ thy father yields to me

all his rights over thee; I shall take thee away to-night." The child answered by merely stretching forth his arms, and saying, 'Will dame Genevieve come with us?' That call made me weep; I loved him so! I thought he greatly displeased his father, for he seemed to regret only me. My lord, as he had said, departed with Augustus on that very evening.

"The Elector is an excellent man, but not very intelligent. Having destined his nephew for the church, he placed him with the most learned member of his chapter; a man more fitted to confer with men, than to train up a child. His visage never beamed with the slightest smile.

Perpetually occupied, he passed his whole time in his cabinet, and paid no other attention to Augustus, than to give him a forced task, much above his years, which he was to perform by himself in a distant apartment. My poor Augustus, devoted to hard and continual study, surrounded with austere people, left in complete solitude, thenceforward acquired that tendency to a still and meditative life, which has made him what you now see him.

“ Yet one day when he was alone with his uncle, he ventured to speak to him of the weariness which oppressed him. His lordship, who had a profound respect for the understanding of the man to whom he

had entrusted his nephew, said to the child in a severe tone, 'Had thy father then just reason to complain of thee?' Augustus, even at that age too haughty, answered not a word. Misfortune had given his disposition and mind a premature developement; he submitted to his lot, but he detested the situation in which he was placed. I can compare him to nothing but that timepiece; the springs play and it goes, but you see none of the works outside.

"My dear Augustus had not me with him to soothe, and sometimes to enliven him. This new education did not expand his young heart, or dispose him to lay open his mind. It left him generous, for he was born

so; but it gave him not those mild and winning manners which his mother had; they are rarely acquired, except by those, whose infancy has been happy.

“ He was sixteen when Monsieur de Balançon had a fall from his horse. The physicians announced that he could not survive it; he enquired for his brother-in-law and his children. The Elector was indisposed, and Augustus came alone.

“ I watched for his arrival. I was the first who saw him; and how much was I pleased with his feelings! He was alive to nothing but his father's danger, which deeply afflicted him. Monsieur de Balançon might have seized this opportunity

for attaching him again to his family; but he chose rather to use menaces, and make the boy feel his authority. This father, whom I dare not call merciless, declared his resolution not to give his blessing to Augustus until he had pledged himself to secure a fortune for Leopold, as soon as he should have obtained his uncle's place.

“ Augustus was of a disposition which allowed no one to doubt, that he would share his fortune with his younger brother; but the condition which his father coupled with the blessing to be pronounced on him, as on his other children, gave him an aversion to Leopold equal to the love which he had been disposed to



feel for him. In short, it seemed that every circumstance was contrived to wound his ardent mind, and wither within him all the gentle and natural affections. Yet he performs even more than he promised ; for from that time he has given to Leopold half of the pension which his uncle allows him, and of this the Elector knows nothing.

“ Monsieur de Balançon, before his death, ordered his three sons to embrace each other. He bade them swear to live as brothers, and they all took the oath. Ever since that time, Monsieur de Varambon has been in the habit of passing some weeks here every summer. His visit is a season of happiness to the people

on the estate, for there is no one in misfortune, whom his charity does not find out and relieve. But he himself is not happy; he has been too much thwarted and grieved in his infancy.

“ Besides, Monsieur de Balançon, the father of these gentlemen, not only left the bulk of his property to his eldest son, limiting the others to a small portion; but he also appointed him their guardian. That office gives an authority bounded by no laws, yet it cannot be resisted without violation of the paternal will, and a breach of the promises made to a dying father.”

“ Ah! my dear young lady,” said Genevieve, clasping her hands, and

addressing Helen in a supplicating tone, "persuade your sister to love Monsieur de Varambon. Believe me he deserves it. Depict him to her as he is, having some apparent faults, and a thousand hidden virtues. He has an ardent soul, which would need to be reclaimed, I might say prepossessed. Madame de Balançon will find him a most affectionate brother, if she can make him feel that he has in her an indulgent sister and a true friend."

Great was the pity which Mademoiselle de Tournon felt for the too sensitive Augustus. She imagined all that he must have suffered, with that soul of fire of which Genevieve had spoken in such animated terms.

That impassioned temperament, which might cause him much wretchedness, agitated the heart of Helen in a manner hitherto unwonted; how happy must she be who was the friend of a man, that had hitherto felt only the pains of life! to see him smile, to revive in him all the gentle affections, and in short, to give him a new existence! Helen did not imagine that so pure a felicity was reserved for her. It was to be the portion of her sister; but at least she would dispose that sister to love Monsieur de Varambon, and she, with herself, might restore peace to the family.

She asked Genevieve why she had never related all these details to her

sister, and how it happened that she so seldom went to see her. Genevieve replied, " I feel more at ease with you ; your youth, your goodness, encourage me ; besides, Monsieur de Balançon has little regard for me, and I have scarcely any attachment to him ; of this he is not ignorant. If he were to see me frequently with his wife, he might take umbrage at it, and shew some spleen ; and I would not willingly be the means of making known to my lady your sister, the faults of him whom she ought to respect." This considerate remark convinced Mademoiselle de Tournon, that she ought to withhold from her sister a recital, which would only throw

light on the character of her husband.

She had always, however, some new enquiries to make ; she still wanted many explanations, respecting the concerns of a family into which accident had thrown her. She wished to know by what motive Monsieur de Balançon was induced to retain Genevieve, since she admitted that her presence was not agreeable to him. " On that point I have had many thoughts for which I reproach myself," said this excellent woman ; " but in fact, my lady, at her death, left me a sum far exceeding my wants. As it is provided, in that article of her will which concerns me, ' that this sum

*is to be placed in my own hands, if I should quit the castle,'* I think her aim was to prevent them from sending me away, and hence she might feel assured that I should remain with her dear Augustus. Her foresight has been verified by the event; for it appears that Monsieur de Balançon chooses to let me vegetate here, so it is likely that I shall end my days in this house; for assuredly I shall demand nothing which may harm one of the children of my good mistress."

Mademoiselle de Tournon went down to her sister, feeling an interest in Monsieur de Varambon, far different from that which he had hitherto excited in her. He was a

man whose sorrows she guessed, and whose merit she knew better than his own family. She was so far from being disturbed with these feelings, that she was scarcely conscious of them. Could she believe, that, having scarcely spoken with him, they should be so deep and so dangerous!

Monsieur de Varambon was not in the same state of security. Though he might conceal from all eyes his passion for her, he was obliged to own it to himself. Though he daily resolved to avoid Helen, he could never bring himself to quit the apartment where she was present; to gaze on her, to listen to her, to watch her movements, even to see



her walk across a room, caused his heart to palpitate.

He passed all his evenings in Madame de Balançon's cabinet, where his brother did not deign to remain. These were the only moments to which Monsieur de Varambon attached any value; he expected them with an impatience which rendered the interval of day insupportably heavy. When with his sisters, he was alive to those gentle and tender feelings which alone render life estimable; sometimes he read to them while they were at work; but more frequently shrinking as it were from the futurity which threatened him, he would retire to a corner, as if he had been alone,

pore over a book without reading it, and abandon himself to the most bitter anticipations. At other times, he joined in any flow of gaiety which animated the two sisters ; and they were happy to see him share their amusement.

One day, when he was giving way to those fits of dejection which beset him, Madame de Balançon said to her sister in a low voice, " Draw him as he is at present, and when he next yields to his melancholy, we will shew him the portrait, that he may recollect himself." Helen, taken by surprise, dared neither refuse, nor commence the drawing required. " I am afraid to offend him," said she. " No, no," answer-

ed her sister, "it will have been done at my desire."

Monsieur de Varambon, perceiving that he was the subject of their discourse, enquired what they were engaged upon. Helen looked abashed, and Madame de Balançon answered, "I desired her to make me a drawing, representing you in the attitude of despair in which you appeared just now, so amiable as you were last night. She observed to me, that it would be necessary to draw your portrait every day, to be satisfied that some or other of the attempts might prove a likeness."

This pleasantry made him smile, and gave Mademoiselle a perturbation which delighted him. "I never

uttered such nonsense," she exclaimed. "Did you think it?" enquired he, in a tender and timid voice. "Ah!" replied she, with the most touching simplicity, "surely you do not believe I did." These words sank into the heart of Monsieur de Varambon. The gaiety of the past evening, the desire of pleasing, the sweet confidence which then prevailed, were revived to enliven this interview. He desired Mademoiselle de Tournon to draw a portrait of her sister, but he wished that the expression might be somewhat ironical. "I am even disposed to throw into it a little perfidy," said Helen, smiling; "for indeed she has imputed to me remarks which

are wholly ridiculous, and void of truth."

She proceeded to her task, and for the first time Monsieur de Varambon ventured ~~to~~ approach her; leaning on the back of her chair, and pretending to follow the traces of her pencil, he was conscious of nothing but the enchantment of being near her. At every instant Helen's eyes were raised to consult him, whether Madame de Balançon's features were made sufficiently designing, and whether they were such as to excite mistrust. They talked and laughed aloud, while pretending to combine to punish her, and revenge themselves. Madame de Balançon, amused by their feigned

anger, declared she would tear to pieces this work of the wicked ; but Monsieur de Varambon seized it, and bore it away in triumph, highly gratified to possess a performance of Helen's.

When he had returned to his apartment, his mind was impressed with a delightful recollection of the amusements he had experienced this evening ; yet he soon reflected on the engagements which he had promised to contract. The will of his father, declared in his last moments, his uncle's kindness and good offices, all recurred to his memory. " Mercy, mercy !" exclaimed he to this mental monitor ; " pursue me not with the register of my duties ; I will

yield to the wishes of my family ; but grant me a single day, a single instant of leisure, to enjoy my own heart, and give way to the charm of such sweet illusions."

One morning Genevieve failed to appear at her accustomed hour. Helen was uneasy at this, and quickly enveloping herself in a light robe, scarcely binding up her beautiful tresses, she hastened to see that excellent woman. Genevieve was so indisposed as to be unable to quit her chamber ; but she did not keep her bed. She was deeply grateful for the attention, when she beheld Mademoiselle de Tournon. She tried to rise from her chair, but she had not strength. Her effort

having disarranged the pillows against which she leaned, Helen, with the amiable promptitude of a young and feeling heart, adjusted them, and was helping to place her more at ease, when Monsieur de Varambon appeared.

He came to enquire how his old governess found herself. He was extremely moved at having become the unexpected witness of Mademoiselle de Tournon's goodness. She was not yet seated, and he, fearing that the sight of him might hurry her away, presented a chair. She took it, and without well knowing what she was doing, pointed to one for himself. Seated near Genevieve, they began to converse on



have left me, that, if my wife were to visit all the servants who are ailing, she might set up for a Lady Bountiful, which would be ridiculous. Besides, I forbid her to shew any partiality to Genevieve, who deserves none from me, and my wife is myself." Helen dared not utter a word in reply, nor could she own that she had been with Genevieve ; but she resolved to continue her visits so long as she should be sick.

On entering the dining-room, she passed before Monsieur de Varambon, and said to him in a rapid and low voice, " Do not say where you saw me this morning." So then, they had little secrets between themselves, and reciprocal interests which

were not known to the family! Their goodness of heart approximated them, and they were blinded by the innocence of their intentions; but how will the slightest mystery strengthen intimacy! What troubles will it not cause!

After dinner they went to sit in their usual place; they spoke not, and from habit they kept at a great distance from each other. Their deportment, when together, would have appeared to an indifferent eye to bespeak indifference, if not aversion. But there prevailed between them a conformity of taste and opinion so perfect, that when a word was uttered which either gratified or wounded their sensibilities, their

eyes instantly met ; a lively and sudden impulse seemed to affect both at the same time.

Next day Monsieur de Varambon visited Genevieve at a very early hour. He was no longer led to her apartment solely by the interest he felt in her ; he was attracted by the hope of seeing Mademoiselle de Tournon. His attentive ear caught the least noise ; the lightest foot-step caused his heart to beat. At length Helen appeared. Her manner was gracious but rather agitated. " I had to wait until every one was out of the way, that I might come," said she to Genevieve, " for I was unwilling to meet any person."

Monsieur de Varambon, after

Helen had made her enquiries of the patient, asked in a low tone what was her motive for the caution she had given him the preceding day. She hesitated to let him know it. "Your sister," resumed he, "surely took it ill that you should bestow any attentions on a woman whom she neglects, but who however was cherished by my mother?" He was ready to believe, that if any one had censured those attentions, it must have been his brother, but he wished to be certain of that, and he did not doubt that, by accusing Madame de Balançon, he should urge her sister to disclose, in her defence, a secret which he desired to know.

In fact, Helen, indignant that he

should dare to suspect Madame de Balançon of such harshness, exclaimed quite angrily, "You know her very little; it was her husband." At these words the countenance of Monsieur de Varambon changed so much that Helen's irritation subsided into timidity. "Heavens!" said she, "I would have willingly concealed it from you, for it is very wrong to create animosity between two brothers. But I could not hear you blame my sister, and continue to be indifferent. Promise me," said she in a tone of entreaty, "that you will not say a word; that you will utter no reproach to Monsieur de Balançon." — "I do promise;" said Monsieur de Varambon; "and to set you entirely at ease, I will own that

you have told me nothing new. I am certain that, if your sister be not an angel of goodness like yourself, it is the fault of her husband, who thwarts and constrains her." — "Well," replied Helen, "since you were certain of that, it was very wrong to lead me into an error, for which I shall reproach myself as soon as I am alone." — "Do not you perceive how much it would delight me to possess your confidence without reserve?" — "I do not owe it you, and I am obliged to respect the duties of my sister." — "Yes, before the world; but with me —" His countenance beamed with so soft an expression, and his accents were so touching, that Helen knew

not what to answer. She thought too that Monsieur de Varambon was very different from the rest of mankind.

Still, she would not concede to him; neither could she find that he had been in the wrong. They carried on a playful dispute for some time, like real children. While with Genevieve, they were gay, content, and unreserved towards each other. But, then, what had they to say? Their talk was filled with those trifling details, those nothings, at which indifference would make no pause, but which, in the first moments of love, are so important. Every look speaks preference, every word comes from the heart, and seems to be its secret.

M. de Varambon, approaching Genevieve, said, " My good friend, it is my brother's fault, if his wife comes not with us to see you." — " There," said Helen, " see how you keep your word ! You have said exactly what you promised not to say. That is very wrong, and I am again angry." He gave her to understand that Genevieve, accustomed to his brother's indifference, was but little affected by it ; while she might possibly have been concerned at the neglect of Madame de Balançon, remembering as she did the kindness of her former mistress.

" It is recorded," said she, " that you are always to be in the right. But it is my wish, that by your de-



portment toward Monsieur de Balançon, by your silence as to what has escaped me this morning, you prove to me, that your brother is my brother, and that my sister is your sister." Thoughtless Helen! not to perceive the rights which she gives over herself, in speaking authoritatively? She receives submission, she accepts obedience, and her heart ceases to belong to her! She will soon be subdued by an uncontrollable sentiment, which now appears to her only as a most delightful friendship.

"Ah!" said Monsieur de Varambon, "I feel with rapture the mutual ties which bind me to you, and for your sake they become dearer to me." — "You called him

severe and melancholy," rejoined Helen, addressing Genevieve; "and he is a flatterer; did you know that he had that ugly fault?" Genevieve, who doated on Monsieur de Varambon, rejoiced to see him cheerful even for an instant. Yet she adjured them not to offend M. de Balancon either by word or act. — Helen went away, but not without taking the precaution to look if there were any one in the corridor who might see her pass.

Monsieur de Varambon remained with Genevieve. He was somewhat displeased that she should have accused him of being severe and melancholy. What a fine opinion that young person must have formed of

him! Genevieve was obliged to repeat all the details which she had related to Helen. Monsieur de Varambon wished to know exactly the matters she had told, and the words she had used. But when he himself reverted to the years in which he had been so unhappy, he felt that their remembrance revived the aversion with which his brother had inspired him from infancy. Hence, when he returned to the saloon, he was no longer the same man. That smiling countenance had resumed its gravity; that gentleness of voice, that flow of sentiment in his expressions, were superseded by short phrases, uttered in a dry tone. Helen could not recognize him.

She remarked to her sister, that he seemed dejected. Monsieur de Balançon was pacing about the chamber in an ill humour, which he could hardly conceal. At length he said to his brother, " You have sent relief then to those farmers whom I wished to be rid of, because they delayed to pay their arrears." — " Yes." — " I think you might have consulted me, to ascertain whether they merited your beneficence." — " Their distress was known to me; that was enough." — " You are not aware whether they did not merit it. Besides they displeased me. I had an opportunity of clearing my hands of them, for they would have been obliged to resign to me their

farms ; but now since they have paid me what they owed me, their sensitive souls would cry aloud against injustice, were I to admit more punctual tenants. It is, however, of little consequence, apparently, that those whom I employ should remain dependent on me."

Monsieur de Varambon, feeling that the epithet "sensitive souls," was applied to him, grew angry, but merely replied, "If sensitive souls are sometimes mistaken, they at least receive the blessings of the unfortunate." — "I am quite sure, that such a concert of praise must be very flattering," replied Monsieur de Balançon ; "but in the case before us, charity only tends to pro-

mote confusion. That farmer, for instance, instead of being economical and industrious, was culpably extravagant. At his table there was a continual feast; he kept open house for all the neighbouring farmers; his purse was ever at the service of all vagrants; in short, his farm-house was better known than the château itself; and on a Sunday, his daughters were better dressed than my wife. I hope you see that this is very disagreeable."

Monsieur de Varambon knew nothing of the details which his severity did not allow him to approve; but he believed them to be exaggerated; and the more his brother accused the farmer, the more he was disposed to defend him. He

therefore replied ; “ A little indulgence to the girls is excusable in a fond father. That Sunday festival which you censure, was nothing more than a friendly meeting ; would you forbid them to pass among themselves the only day of the week in which they forget their toil and trouble ? As to the alms distributed to poor mendicants, they gave the man some enjoyment, they made him relish the sweets of benevolence.” Then looking at his brother disdainfully, he added, “ That man would be much to be pitied, who should be doomed never to have the pleasure of giving.” — “ Assuredly, my brother, I do not lay that to your charge,” replied Monsieur de Balançon ; “ but next to him who pays

not what he owes, and is always making requests, what I most abhor, is the prodigal who squanders his property without knowing where it falls." — "And I, brother, am not pointing at you," answered Monsieur de Varambon; "but I hate those hard-hearted people, those frigid beings, armed with inflexible reason, whom no misfortune touches, with whom no fault propitiates indulgence. I view them, scalping knife in hand, dissect all the actions of others without ever examining their own; they are skilful anatomists; they know how things are, and where they should be placed; but no living mortal around them feels



emotion, no heart beats at their approach."

Mademoiselle de Tournon, hearing this warm argument, was fearful that a separation would take place between the brothers ; she cast on Monsieur de Varambon a look so full of apprehension, that his countenance, inflamed as it was, became composed, and he added not another word. His brother continued to fume, and repeated over and over again what he had just said. When any pointed expressions seemed likely to wound Monsieur de Varambon, Helen's eyes sought his, and seemed to plead for pardon ; one of her looks, all powerful on his mind, was capable of softening him.

He went and sate by the side of Madame de Balançon, and perceiving the vehement agitation of her husband, said, “ Brother, I regret that I relieved that family without consulting you ; but it must be for you that they ought to preserve a property which their fathers have long cultivated, and of this I shall not fail to remind them.” This was the first time that Monsieur de Varambon had condescended to make an excuse to his brother. How great was his reward in the joy which shone from Helen’s countenance. Her emotion, on perceiving that she was able to check the impetuosity of that ardent mind, was inexpressible. The looks, therefore, the en-

treaty of a dear friend, can repress a temperament too ready to take offence.

Helen's heart was deeply affected. She expected to revive for Varambon the attachment of the family, and thus to ensure his felicity. She mentally elevated herself as counsel and judge ; she resolved to watch over him as a tender and solicitous friend : not perceiving that her own repose was for ever lost.

Solely occupied with him, she lent a listless ear to the most animated conversation ; she was attentive only when Monsieur de Varambon interposed. Then, if he spoke, she would watch him ; if he grew angry and raised his voice, she appeared un-

easy ; and he became silent. There was no longer any distance or reserve to separate them ; and though not a word might be spoken, they conversed in a language mutually intelligible without an interpreter.

Neither Monsieur de Varambon nor Helen perceived how much their conduct was changed. Every morning it was the custom of Mademoiselle de Tournon to take long walks in the park. At the time when Augustus's visit to his brother commenced, she had often met him there. On those occasions, they at first merely exchanged a polite greeting ; when they next met, the salutation was repeated with a faint smile, followed by a few compli-

ments, after which they each continued their way. But at the present period, they stayed to converse. For instance, a fine day ; a dark gloomy day ; or perhaps some very beautiful flower, might cause them to remain a short time together ; by degrees Monsieur de Varambon would venture to return, and walk by her side ; at length those hours became whole mornings, and they were scarcely ever asunder.

In this manner Monsieur de Varambon abandoned himself to his passion, confident that he should always be able to conceal it, and that it would never be known to Mademoiselle de Tournon. He never quitted her without thinking

of next day's walk. He was therefore much disappointed when one evening as he returned to his chamber, a letter was put into his hands which required him to be absent from the chateau at least the whole of the next day.

A very respectable man announced to him that his family was visited with unforeseen misfortune, and requested to be saved from despair. At a moment when his soul was possessed with every benevolent affection, he could not be inaccessible to pity. He made no hesitation, but he could not bear the idea of going without first informing Mademoiselle de Tournon of his journey.

It pained him to think, that her walk the next day would be solitary; and that, perhaps, she might accuse him of negligence. That apprehension disturbed him. He visited Genevieve at an early hour. He who carefully concealed the good which he did, scrupled not to tell this good woman in confidence that he was going to console some wretched people. He had certainly no idea of boasting of so natural a proceeding, but he hoped that Genevieve, always eager to speak of him, would impart to Mademoiselle de Tournon the reason of his absence, and that he should thus obtain her pardon.

Anxious to be with her again, he

rode hard and hastened his return. Towards evening he appeared in the saloon. Monsieur and Madame de Balançon were still there. But what was his surprise at seeing Helen playing at battledore with Leopold ! She was gay, and animated with the amusement and exercise of the game ; and he had been all day counting the minutes ! It was with some effort that he had attended to the story of the unfortunate. Then expressions of gratitude had annoyed him, because they delayed his departure. Yet while he was so deeply occupied with Helen, she thought not of him, and was amusing herself with Leopold.

Monsieur de Varambon had en-



tered the room with that heartfelt joy which is so natural on visiting a beloved object. He changed countenance, and sat down in silence. Monsieur de Balançon, who had been accustomed of late to see him more sociable and communicative, asked him where he had been. He made no answer.—Helen in astonishment looked at Monsieur de Varambon : she did not meet his eye. She resumed her usual place, and said not a word.

Poor Leopold, deeming himself the cause of his brother's displeasure, went away, and Monsieur de Balançon retired at his usual hour. When he was gone, his wife asked her brother-in-law if any thing had given

him pain. Monsieur de Varambon assured her that he had no pain, but was, on the contrary, quite at ease. She invited him to come and sit by her side. He obeyed. — “Yet really,” said she, “I perceive that some painful feeling troubles you; would you forbid my sincere affection to be concerned at it?” “Certainly not,” he replied, “and since I must own it, I have discovered that a friend, to whom I had given my whole soul, bestowed not a thought on me, and was equally indifferent whether I was present or absent.”

Helen, whose eyes were intent on her work, lost not a word of this reply. So much injustice roused

her indignation. 'This then was the Augustus who was so submissive to her when the conduct of others was in question! But when she herself had unwittingly provoked his perverse temper, there was no longer an intelligent look exchanged; not a sign could repress his unaccountable caprice. Never would she forgive him! Helen quitted her sister much earlier than her accustomed hour of retiring. In going, she saw that Monsieur de Varambon's eyes were following her, and in a glance at his countenance, she caught an expression of regret. This symptom of conciliation was in vain; it induced her to hasten her departure.

Yet, on the following day, she was

in the park long before the hour when they usually met. Monsieur de Varambon was waiting for her in anxious suspense, tormented by the fear that she would not deign to come, and by the desire that she would come. On seeing each other, they paused; it seemed to be a sort of punctilio which should speak the first. The more angry she seemed, the more timid he became. At last he said, "I am afraid I shall displease you by walking with you." — "I assure you," said she, "that is to me quite a matter of indifference." — "I can easily believe it," replied he, chagrined; "but I did not expect such contemptuous disdain."

He was going away, but Helen recalled him, "I should like to know," said she, "what offended you yesterday." Monsieur de Varambon would not own that an unhappy tendency to jealousy had for an instant disturbed his mind. "Will it suffice when I tell you," replied he, "that I was in an excess of pain so violent as to trouble my reason. I was no longer myself."

Helen attributed the ill-humour of Monsieur de Varambon, to that gloomy disposition which he derived from the vexations of his childhood. She grieved to see that he was unhappy; but far from telling him so, they passed the morning, she in

accusing him, and he in defending himself: he acknowledged none of his faults; for he could not bear the idea that she should suppose he had a fault. She insisted that he should plead guilty, persuaded that the confession would effect his amendment. No longer understanding each other, they were mutually prepared to go, but they could not separate.

Monsieur de Varambon, while speaking only of friendship, disclosed all the exactions of love; he argued that an entire attachment should be met by exclusive preference and constant devotedness. Helen only conceded to it a mild, confiding, and delighted affection, such as she had

experienced. — “ But, in short,” said he, abruptly, “ why do you call my younger brother, *Leopold*, when you never call me, *Augustus*?” — “ Ah!” replied she quickly, “ I call him *Leopold*, without thinking of it, as do all the family. But were I to call you *Augustus*, I should fancy I drew all eyes upon me.”

These words filled him with joy. Returning to her, he owned that his temper was changeable and gloomy ; and he laid open his character with such severity, that she was obliged to defend him against himself. He promised to be more moderate : thenceforward a single word from her should control his very thoughts.

for he now recognised only one power on earth. His tractability merged into submission ; and if he aimed to be perfect, it was from a desire to please. All these assurances were engraven on Helen's heart. Not only did she feel certain, that in future no cloud would overshadow their tender friendship, but she even thought she should scarcely have a fault to find in him. She reproached herself in turn, and admitted that, if more attention had been paid, this misunderstanding, now so happily dissipated, would not have occurred.

Monsieur de Varambon had long desired to know all that had hitherto concerned Mademoiselle de Tour-



non ; he wished to retrace with her the time which was passed. " That," said he, " shall be my futurity, for henceforth I will occupy myself solely with her." Involuntarily anxious respecting the loose manners then prevailing at the French court, he wished to know what recollection she retained of them.

Helen informed him with what strictness she had been educated by her mother, and in what seclusion she had lived ; how, in its very precincts, she had always been kept from the court. Every word seemed to relieve Monsieur de Varambon from a pang, to free him from a torment ; and if a supreme command had then bidden him to reveal his

thoughts, what expressions of joy and love would have burst from his soul! Not daring to let Mademoiselle de Tournon know the happiness he felt, he raised his eyes, and said, "How clear the heavens are!" and it was of her that he was thinking. "Yes," replied she, "but yesterday the storm terrified me." Such was her emotion, and so tender was the affection which animated him, that they could no longer suppress their mutual feelings. They gazed on each other, and after a momentary pause of mute astonishment, they parted, each absorbed in reflections which had not hitherto possessed their minds.

So long as Monsieur de Varambon

believed that he alone was in love, he had considered only his duties to his family; but now that he could flatter himself with having interested Mademoiselle de Tournon, he dwelt only on the injustice of his parents. He did not, however, believe himself as yet engaged; he might still refuse his consent; and thence forward he should be free! The very thought of freedom gave him such strong emotion, that he was wholly enraptured; and for whom he enquired, did they wish that he should sacrifice himself. His elder brother possessed the family estate. Did Leopold deserve from him so absolute a self-devotion? Where was he at that moment? He was amusing himself;

wasting his youth in the fatigues of the chase; he was living without care, consuming his best days in the society of ladies, who amused without interesting him. To them he was dedicating his existence, without loving, without foreseeing or remembering any thing. He will do well any where, since he will be unhappy no where.

While accusing his brothers, Monsieur de Varambon reverted to himself: should he be happy? Would not that secluded life to which he was accustomed estrange him too much from those frivolous pleasures which the youth of Mademoiselle de Tournon might perhaps incline her to seek? "Ah!" said he, "my soul

aspires to a love which shall be equal to that which I feel. And should I not blush to avow this ardent love, which appears like supreme felicity, or which I dread as an evil?" He then considered that his fortune, so inferior to that of Monsieur de Balançon, would prove an invincible obstacle ; and that if Helen condescended to be satisfied with it, he himself could not bear to see her subjected to inevitable privations. He was returning, overwhelmed by these reflections, when he found himself near Mademoiselle de Tournon, who was also directing her steps to the chateau.

The mildest serenity reigned over her countenance, and gave it addi-

tional charms. She also had been musing; but what a sum of happiness did all her thoughts anticipate! Monsieur de Varambon seemed not at all inclined to enter into the state for which he was destined; then she could not see what should prevent their marriage, if she was beloved by him. "I should remain with my sister," said she, "with my earliest friend; there is not one of my recollections with which her own would not accord. We should end our days in the same place; we should have the same name, the same family interests." She was indulging these animating thoughts, when she met Monsieur de Varambon. She recognised him with a smile, which dis-

pelled every reflection that gave him pain. On seeing each other, they stopped; they were going to speak, when a servant came to tell Mademoiselle de Tournon that her sister begged she would come to her immediately. She hastened to the chateau: Monsieur de Varambon followed her.

They found Monsieur de Balançon in an intolerable ill humour. Don Juan of Austria, whom his brother Philip the Second of Spain had just sent into the Netherlands to assume the government, had announced to him, that, as he should be passing near his residence within two days, he should make a stay there of a day and a night.

“ He might have taken me by

surprise, or only given me notice on the morning of his arrival," said Monsieur de Balançon, "without giving me time to make inconvenient and ruinous preparations." He wished to be magnificent, but he was afraid of the expense. He scolded his people, and quarrelled with his wife, in whom he found no resource. In fact, as Madame de Balançon knew no one in that country, she was ignorant what invitations ought to be given; she could not imagine what kind of festivities would be suitable. She was unable either to help her husband in his embarrassments, or to defend herself against his reproaches.

Mademoiselle de Tournon, to re-



lieve her sister, said, "A ball and supper would be very speedily arranged." "A ball!" said Monsieur de Varambon, as if thunderstruck. "A ball!" "Surely," said his brother, in a hasty tone. Monsieur de Varambon, who was surprised and troubled at the idea of a ball, said, he thought Don Juan would take little pleasure in an amusement which was offered to him at every town. "Would you rather have had a play?" replied his brother; "something dramatized for the occasion? There are some people who are always wanting wit! As for me, I decide for the ball; it will have a festive effect, without requiring extensive preparations."

The two sisters passed the day in writing invitations, and preparing their dresses. This business banished other recollections from Helen's mind; not that the agitation pleased her, but that a forced occupation engrossed attention, and filled up the time.

The whole chateau was thrown into confusion in making arrangements for a ball-room. Madame de Balançon gave one order, her husband countermanded it by another: Helen interposed her advice, when they could not agree. The servants hurried to and fro, and Monsieur de Varambon witnessed all this bustle with a kind of stupor. He was much dissatisfied with Mademoiselle

de Tournon for proposing an amusement which his habits of life forbade him to participate.

On the arrival of Don Juan, Monsieur de Balançon appeared to be flattered with the honour done him ; for he assumed his good humour with his gala dress. A sumptuous dinner was given. Monsieur de Varambon saw, with excessive pain, that all eyes were attracted toward Mademoiselle de Tournon. Don Juan was placed between the two sisters. While the elder, as lady of the mansion, paid every attention to the Prince, he was wholly occupied with Helen. Her extreme beauty enraptured him ; her reserve, which allowed her scarcely to manifest any

desire to please, piqued his self-love and his curiosity.

Don Juan appeared so charmed and so enthusiastic while near her, that Monsieur de Varambon, ever prone to jealousy, construed the simple wish to be agreeable, into that first perturbation of the passions which decides the future course of life. Seated opposite the prince, he never for a moment lost sight of him; he watched his looks, he listened to his words, he frequently imputed to them a meaning which they had not; in short, he converted every thing into a torment. Don Juan, the natural son of Charles the Fifth, yet a legitimate prince! Might he not cultivate the

good graces of Mademoiselle de Tournon, one of whose near relations had espoused Lorenzo de' Medici, whose father was allied to the royal family of France? When this idea occurred to his mind, it instantly struck him as a misfortune much to be dreaded.

When the company rose from table, the music for the ball was heard. Ere he retired, Monsieur de Varambon, approaching Helen, said, "Be gay, be happy, but do not forget your absent friends." — "I have only one who will be absent," she replied, and her blushes named him. Monsieur de Varambon retired a few paces, as if to withdraw, then returning to her, he said,

“ How different are those pleasures from happiness!” and he forced himself away, as if he feared that in one instant more he should not have resolution to leave her.

He returned to his apartment, whither he was still pursued by the sound of the music. The ball-room was above his own : all the footsteps were heard. He was disturbed by what was passing; he had not an instant of repose; he sent for Genevieve, and foregoing all prudence, said to her, “ My good, my dear friend, go and see the ball; see what Mademoiselle de Tournon is doing.” — “ She is dancing, Sir, I come from thence.” — “ With whom?” asked he, much agitated. He foresaw, he knew, and

yet he enquired. Did he hope for an answer which might calm his jealousy, that cruel passion from which he was to suffer so much?

“ Mademoiselle de Tournon is dancing with the Prince,” replied Genevieve; “ he sees no one but her; he has danced with no one but her; she is the queen of the ball.” — “ How does she receive his attentions?” asked he eagerly. — “ Without noticing them; she is as modest as she is beautiful!”

The dancers were still heard; Monsieur de Varambon might have counted every step. This new torture was insupportable; he rushed into the park. Its dark alleys and the tranquil night failed to restore him to

himself. His eyes were constantly fixed on the windows of the chateau: he saw shadows flitting about the ceiling: waving plumes appeared and disappeared, shewing the animated movements of the dancers: he sought to distinguish only one lady, and he could not.

On a sudden he observed servants hastening to light some large lamps which were to illuminate the gardens. The cypher of Don Juan shone in coloured glass. Monsieur de Varambon returned to his apartment in greater haste than when he quitted it. He extinguished his tapers, that he might not be seen from without, and he stood at the window of his gloomy chamber to view what was



passing in the park. Over head, the music, the gaiety, the giddy whirl of the ball ; before him, the glare of the lights ; the gardens hung with bright lamps, bearing an odious cypher ; himself, in solitude, darkness, and silence, yet more agitated than any one else !

It was the finest season of the year. He soon perceived several ladies who had quitted the ball-room to walk in the gardens. Don Juan appeared arm in arm with the two sisters. Monsieur de Varambon lost his self-possession. But how was he affected at seeing Helen turn several times, and look toward his apartment. She appeared to be sad : then she was musing on him ;

tears escaped from his eyes, and he did not feel them flow.

After some turns, Helen quitted Don Juan, and slowly drew near the chateau. She stopped before the window where Monsieur de Varambon had just experienced such excruciating anguish. What were his emotions!—the ball, Don Juan, the obtrusive cyphers, all disappeared! Helen alone was present to his view. She will be happy in retirement, thought he; we shall live for each other; she will content herself with the humble fortune which I can offer her.—O, love! thou alone canst depict the tempests of the heart, which a mere nothing can raise, and a single movement can calm! The

**HELEN DE TOURNON.**

sound of the music, the light footsteps, the undulations of those floating plumes, had agitated his very soul; a look tranquillised him. He was now armed against futurity, and he passed the rest of the night in hopes of happiness.

Next day Madame de Balançon entertained Don Juan with a superb breakfast before his departure. When the carriages were announced, the prince rose, took aside Monsieur de Varambon to the recess of a window, reproached him for having retired so precipitately on the preceding evening, and in a lower tone added, "The Spanish Government, like the inquisition, dives into the secrets of the heart; I can account for your

sadness ; I have well ascertained your feelings ; if a respectable station, to which, however, all are not called, should be repugnant to you, apply to me ; you will always find me ready to serve you." He approached Madame de Balançon, and thanking her for her kindness, said, " Your destiny is fixed, Madam ; I hope it will be a happy one ; but may I be allowed also to wish Mademoiselle de Tournon the happiness which she merits." Don Juan departed, after paying some cold compliments to Monsieur de Balançon, whose faults had not escaped his notice.

The whole family having attended Don Juan to his carriage, Monsieur

and Madame de Balançon returned into the chateau. Helen went to sit under her favourite tree in the park. She was grieved at the recollection of the past evening, and regretted having proposed a ball, as it had separated Monsieur de Varambon from the company. She expected him with impatience; and as soon as he appeared, she hastened to meet him, saying, with a timid accent, "Are you still angry?" On finding her so sympathising and kind, Monsieur de Varambon bitterly reproached himself for his unjust jealousy, yet her presence revived the painful sensations he had experienced. Hence, after a mental struggle, he said mournfully, "Do

you believe there is any happiness?"

This question troubled her, and she answered in a faltering voice, "Do you really doubt that it exists?"

"Not while I behold you," replied he, "but when I am absent from you, there are sentiments which your gentle and tranquil soul cannot conceive." Their emotion was so strong, that they breathed with difficulty; their words died away on their lips. She wished to go; Monsieur de Varambon entreated her to remain an instant. She refused, and persisted in going. "At least," said he, "promise that you will hear me when you walk out again to-morrow?" She dreaded to make a reprehensible condescension.

and uttered in a very low tone a refusal, which gave her pain. "What!" said he in despair, "will you not grant me a single moment?" She could not bear to see the grief which his whole countenance expressed; she ceased to comprehend the meaning of his words; she understood not even her own thoughts, but said, "Why do you ask me to listen to you? Do I not come here every day?" — Monsieur de Varambon kneeled; he caught her hand; implored her. — "Ah! at least until to-morrow, say nothing to any one, either of yourself or of me." She had not power to afflict him longer, and whispered an assent which he guessed rather than understood.

Mademoiselle de Tournon, too well aware of the sentiments she excited, and of those which possessed her, quitted him; but as usual she passed the rest of the day with the family, among whom she again met Monsieur de Varambon.

Seated in her accustomed place, she silently plied her work, and appeared calm, while she could with difficulty control the conflicting emotions which agitated her. A thousand times she vowed not to go out next day; but Monsieur de Varambon had an influence over her of which she was scarcely conscious. In his noble and beautiful countenance, there was a severity which controlled all her movements. He



large dark eyes pursued her, and she was unable to avoid their fascination. She felt as if they read her very thoughts, and she dreaded to afflict him. The struggles which she caused to herself left her no power to form a resolution.

Next day her embarrassment considerably increased. She took one step to descend into the gardens, and then withdrew to her apartment. How was she to proceed? What would he tell her that she knew not already? At length it occurred to her, that she should not arm herself with severity, and shun him at the moment when he ventured to speak to her of his love. As she must necessarily see him every day, would

it not be better to tell him at once, that she could not receive his addresses without her mother's permission! She thought that course of proceeding would be the most sincere. Love is so dangerous a sophist! So she resolved to go into the park as usual.

She advanced; her cold and distant manner struck Monsieur de Varambon, who was waiting for her. His ideas were now all confusion; Mademoiselle de Tournon sat down; he continued standing near her; his behaviour was constrained; his freedom of thought was gone. She saw this, and sympathised in his agitation; but she had at least the power

to confine her share of it in her bosom.

After a considerably long silence, she said, " You desired me, Sir, to be here this morning." — This word, *Sir*, which she had not used for a long time, was far remote from the appellation, *Augustus*, to which he had aspired. Doubtful and agitated, he gazed on her without daring to speak. Helen, as agitated as himself, quitted her seat. " Ah ! no, no," cried he, " in pity fly me not ; hear me ! I was about to renounce, without pain and without regret, all that constitutes the charm of life. You appeared ; and all the images of heartfelt happiness, of mutual at-

tachment, presented themselves to my mind. I chose the state destined for me, with horror ; I detested the selfishness of those relatives who would condemn me to it. Love and hate at once took possession of my soul ; you alone can restore me to milder feelings. Dispose of my life ; for I live more to you than to myself."

Mademoiselle de Tournon dared not leave him, so agitated as she saw he was ; yet a secret voice admonished her, that she ought not to hear the avowal of his love, though he were free to offer her his hand. Endeavouring to appear calm, she said, " Your relatives have decided on your fortune." " Yes, they have

devoted me to misery, but they have not my consent, and they never shall. Let a word from you, let a single look, permit me to believe that the time will come when you will not disdain my affection, and I shall be able to withdraw myself from their ambitious projects.”

In saying these words, his voice partook the accent of prayer. Helen could not restrain her tears; she asked him why he did not apply to her sister, and assured him that from her he would obtain advice, or at least consolation. “Your sister,” said he, “dares not manifest an opinion at variance with that of her husband; and my brother is vain and turbulent; the splendour of his

name dazzles him; the children of grandchildren, whom he will never see, are more considerable in his eyes than the brother whom he ought to love. The fool talks of the ruin of empires, and he believes in the eternal stability of his house. Ah! we shall have many obstacles to surmount!"

She felt an emotion of involuntary joy. In thinking of their time to come, Monsieur de Varambon had included her, without having even obtained her consent; she was pleased with him for not doubting her affection, ere she had given a consent which it was not permitted her to grant. Yet she required that he should speak to Madame de Balançon.

He prevailed on Helen to agree that she would contradict nothing that he chose to say. She replied in a low and tremulous voice, "Nothing." Transported with joy, which excluded every painful feeling, he added, "Even were I to assert, that you would deign to associate your destiny with mine? — "I cannot re-echo your words," said she, hastening away; "address yourself to my sister." She departed without permitting him to follow her.

He stood there, as if enchanted with the new existence which opened to his view. The idea of dedicating his life to *Mademoiselle de Tournon* actuated him with feelings too warm

for his heart to contain. As soon as he had recovered a little self-control, he hastened to Madame de Balancon, who fortunately happened to be alone; but such was his extreme agitation, that he had merely power to throw himself at her feet, and say, "Mademoiselle de Tournon and I, — we shall never leave you."

Madame de Balancon had so much internal torture, she was so absorbed in troubles of her own, that she had not remarked her sister's growing attachment to Monsieur de Varambon, whose destination she deemed to be fixed. So great was her surprise, that she could not find words to express it. The hope of still having Helen with her, ministered



consolation to her mind, like an unexpected pleasure. He told her, it was by her sister's order that he ventured to avow to her his sentiments; that they both requested her counsel and support. She gazed on him with astonishment; the look of happiness which beamed on his features caused her some sad reflections on convenient marriages, "which a mutual attachment must render happy!" said she, sighing. As much affected as her brother himself, she testified her wishes for their happiness, but dreaded to encounter an almost equal opposition from both families; she alternately hoped and despaired.

When she saw Helen again, her

husband was present ; but she whispered to her, “ We shall be doubly sisters.” At night, as soon as Monsieur de Balancon had retired, his wife and his brother indulged the most delightful hopes. In the overflow of their joy, each suggested advice respecting the means of bringing about a marriage, of which the friends of the parties had no idea. Helen dared not say a word in assurance of success ; but, attentive to all that was said, she entered warmly into the discussion of any proposition which she thought must be injurious ; and there could be no doubt that she felt as tender an interest in the question as Monsieur de Varambon himself. He was supremely

happy. It was decided that Madame de Balançon should first write to her mother, to ascertain whether she would consent to the marriage, for it appeared to her quite useless to provoke the wrath of her husband, ere she was certain of the approbation of Madame de Tournon.

That point being settled, they all three placed themselves at a small table to compose the letter. Monsieur de Varambon wished it to be pressing ; the two sisters thought it should be merely submissive. Madame de Balançon, with the patience which perfect friendship alone can impart, wrote, and erased, very frequently to no other purpose than that of recurring to what she had in the

first instance judged to be proper. At length, having expressed to her mother what pain it would give her to part with Helen, she spoke of the merit of Monsieur de Varambon, and of his attachment to her sister. Madame de Balançon slightly adverted to the difficulties which lay in the way; but laid great stress on his and her own determination not to mention this project to Monsieur de Balançon until they should be certain that it would meet with her approbation.

Madame de Tournon was flattered by the respectful deference of Monsieur de Varambon. In her answer she said, that as soon as the elder brother, as head of the family,

should ask from her the hand of Mademoiselle de Tournon, she would give her consent. The letter at the same time manifested some dissatisfaction. She was weary of the place she occupied ; the intrigues of the court were repugnant to the austerity of her principles ; she appeared disquieted by the misfortunes of France, which were continually increasing, and congratulated her daughters on being for ever removed from them.

The acquiescence of Madame de Tournon, though conditional, gave great satisfaction to the little committee which sat every morning in the park. It was Madame de Balançon's wish that her husband

should be very gradually led on to believe that his brother might possibly alter his state in life. Monsieur de Varambon, to whom any delay was insupportable, determined to speak to him that very evening.

He only desired his sister-in-law to be present at the interview, that she might say some words in favour of his demand. It was agreed that Helen should on some pretext retire to her apartment. All these arrangements being made, they separated until the hour of dinner, that Monsieur de Balançon might not perceive the anxiety which troubled them.

At Monsieur de Balançon's table, there were always some of the most

eminent persons of the province. He was too much engrossed with his own dignity to pay much attention to his brother and his sister-in-law ; so that the day passed off tranquilly. But in the evening, when all strangers had retired, he remarked a sort of embarrassment in the looks of Monsieur de Varambon, and asked him what was the matter. " It is," said he, " that I renounce the ecclesiastical state." This declaration, which he had promised to make very gradually and adroitly, he pronounced at once, because it did not include the secret of his heart ; hence, Monsieur de Balançon was struck with surprise and even astonishment. " What say you ?" cried

he. — "I say," replied Monsieur de Varambon, emphatically uttering all his words as if to give them greater weight, "I say that I renounce a state to which I was destined ere I knew the duties and the sacrifices which it imposes and demands; that neither my reason nor my inclination can submit to such an engagement." Monsieur de Balançon, almost stifled with wrath, replied, "I should think you might have consulted me." "Was I consulted when my lot was determined?" "My father determined the lot of each of us." "It is too late to argue on the invincible repugnance which I feel!" — "It is too late for you to abjure the oath you made to



obey him," cried Monsieur de Balançon; "and he has left me his authority." — "Well then," said his brother, "I conjure you to listen to me; I cannot reconcile myself to it; my whole heart revolts at it; I will have nothing to do with a profession repugnant to all my feelings." — "And I, for the honour of our house, must remind you of the steps which have been taken to make you the successor of my uncle. You knew of them; you acquiesced in them." — "I renounce them." — "That shall never be with my consent."

At these words Madame de Balançon lost all hopes. She too well remembered her mother's letter and

its import. Seeing that the brothers grew angry instead of coming to an understanding, she wished to break off a conference which could lead to none but unhappy results ; but this was impossible.

Monsieur de Varambon, having once lost sight of the respect due to him whom his father, on his death-bed, had nominated head of the family, gave full vent to his anger.

He again avowed his determination, and added that nothing should induce him to recall it.

The voices of the brothers grew louder ; their indignation aggravated all their expressions ; each word alienated them in interest and affection. Madame de Balançon was so

terrified that she knew not how to remind her brother-in-law of the condition stipulated by Madame de Tournon for the marriage of her daughter. Could he expect that Helen's hand would be demanded by the head of his family, when every word increased his irritation. She rose, and approaching Monsieur de Varambon with clasped hands and a supplicating look, exclaimed, "My mother!" and then drew back in silence.

This procedure gave her husband to understand that his brother's project had her approbation; he was struck with astonishment; but he deferred requiring an explanation until they should be alone. "What

motive," said he to his brother, " induces you to renounce a profession to which you had resigned yourself?" At this pointed question, the recollection of Helen engrossed Monsieur de Varambon's mind; his anger subsided, and he made no answer. Far from braving his brother, he was ready to fall at his feet, and implore him to consent to their happiness. This perturbation and silence somewhat enlightened Monsieur de Balançon in his conjectures. He looked at his wife; her emotion, her anxiety, explained every thing.

He was firmly resolved not to accede to his brother's wishes. He had the fortune of the family too much at heart; and moreover he

was offended that he had not been consulted. Resting his head on his hands, he deliberated on the means of averting the storm.

While he was engaged in reflections quite adverse to his brother, his wife as well as Monsieur de Varambon interpreted his silence in favour of their wishes. "My sister is a charming woman," said Madame de Balançon timidly; "her presence and that of your brother would add such happiness to our household!" "Madam," replied Monsieur de Balançon severely, "the will, the interests of your husband ought to be your sole guide. I esteem Mademoiselle de Tournon, I honour her good qualities, her virtues; but I doubt

whether her mother would consent to give her away to a man but slenderly provided for; to-morrow I shall write to Madame de Tournon."

"Ah! leave that to me," exclaimed Madame de Balançon; "I know better than you what is likely to offend or to conciliate my mother."

"It is because I will have no subtuges, no indirect and artful expedients employed, that I choose to write myself. If, after I have explained to her my brother's situation, she will give him her daughter, I shall call heaven to witness whether I have not done all in my power to execute the last wishes of my father. I must add, madam, that if the result should be such, as to make Made-

moiselle de Tournon happy, I shall be satisfied ; but that if she should have any afflictions, neither you nor she will have to reproach me for them."

He retired, leaving his brother and Madame de Balançon in despair. They were too well aware, that the smallest uncertainty, the slightest objection, would offend the pride of Madame de Tournon : and that afterwards, it would be impossible to reconcile her. Madame de Balançon promised that she would be with her husband while he was writing the letter, and endeavour to soften down and modify whatever she thought likely to displease her mother. This promise tended in

some degree to tranquillize Monsieur de Varambon, and he quitted his sister-in-law, in a calmer frame of mind.

Madame de Balançon, however, could not prevail on her husband to admit of any of those modifications which her mother's disposition rendered necessary ; she was not allowed even to read that letter on which the fate of her sister depended. Her husband contented himself with using what he thought the mildest phrases, and what she deemed very likely to offend Madame de Tournon. She therefore wrote to her mother herself ; she described to her the mutual affection of Helen and Monsieur de Varambon, expressed how



happy she should feel in having them with her, since her own destiny separated her from a mother, whose absence she daily regretted. She dwelt with enthusiasm on the noble character of her brother-in-law ; on those talents which fitted him for any office to which the king of Spain might be pleased to appoint him ; on the favour of Don Juan, who had held forth to him the prospect of a brilliant situation. In short, she omitted nothing, which could tend to determine her mother to consent. Not daring to remind her, that without consulting her own choice, she had given herself to a man who was far from making her happy, she reverted to that mutual affection which

she hoped would move her. "A marriage of convenience," said she to her, "may confer respectability, may elevate to a station that the world would envy, and yet produce none of the enjoyments that can satisfy the soul." She did not own that she was in this predicament; but it was manifest that she wished her sister that happiness to which she was a stranger.

The bearer of her letter having set out for France, she went to rejoin her sister, and found her terrified at all that Monsieur de Varambon was telling her of the interviews of the preceding day. In vain she strove to revive Helen's hopes; her

mother's disposition was too well known to her.

Until the courier's return with the answer of Madame de Tournon, Helen would not see Monsieur de Varambon, except in the presence of her sister. She felt herself more confident in her presence; their sentiments seemed to be more holy and solemn, when she witnessed their mutual vows. "What does my brother mean," exclaimed Monsieur de Varambon. "Tell him my resolution is irrevocable; tell him so from day to day; say that even if Madame de Tournon were to refuse her consent, I would nevertheless renounce the profession which he would make me embrace!"

“ Ah !” answered Helen, “ if my mother refuses her consent, I will retire from the world and take the veil ; no authority shall move me at least from that resolution.” — Monsieur de Varambon deprecated such a sacrifice with horror. — Madame de Balançon sought to console her sister, and gave her hopes which she was far from conceiving.

Monsieur de Balançon saw the grief of his wife, the despair of his brother, the tears of Helen. These three persons formed a separate family ; and he felt that they regarded him as their common enemy, whom they had to blame for all their vexations. He was little concerned at this, and he expected that time

would mitigate their disgust with him. Time! woe to that unnatural brother! woe to him that could see tears flow, without pity, because he relied on time! who could set at ease his obdurate heart by having recourse to cold calculations for absolution from the pain which he was causing! — Yet, weary with the reproaches which he saw in the eyes of them all, he determined to absent himself for some days under the pretext of going to pay his court to Don Juan of Austria; he took with him Leopold, who wished to enter into the service.

This young man could not but see that there were dissensions among his relations from some cause to him

unknown. Vexed at finding himself treated as a boy, to whom family affairs were not to be mentioned, he departed in an ill-humour, which he made a great merit of not mentioning.

The two sisters remained at the chateau with Monsieur de Varambon. They were inseparable. What moments of pleasing hopes! Yet with how many dismal apprehensions were they alloyed? He, however, who most keenly felt the torture of suspense, experienced from the other two those attentive cares and consoling promises which a tender affection could offer him; so that, notwithstanding their pain, these moments of anxiety left on

his mind the recollection of a happy time.

Monsieur de Balançon returned on the day when he calculated that Madame de Tournon's answer might arrive. His presence threw the whole family into a state of restraint which wearied them and absorbed their thoughts. Seated in that spacious saloon at a great distance from each other, it cost each of them an effort to let fall a few words at very long intervals of silence.

Towards evening their attention was awakened by the noise of a carriage. Soon afterwards appeared a female in the confidence of Madame de Tournon. What palpitation in all hearts! She delivered to Madame

de Balançon a letter, in which her mother, disdaining to speak of the proposed marriage, ordered Helen home, regretting she had suffered her to be away from her so long.

It was evident that Monsieur de Balançon had offended her. Instead of answering him, she charged her daughter to make some excuses on the score of business, which left her no time to write to him. Her letter was short, dry, and void of any intimation of her intentions, though it left them all open to conjecture. — “When are you to go?” said Madame de Balançon to the woman. “To-morrow, Madam.” — “My sister will be prepared to follow you. Meantime go and take



some repose," which from the fatigue of travelling you must need."

When she was gone, Monsieur de Varambon approached his brother, in a concentrated fury which gave to all his features a tremendous expression. — "Behold your work!" said he, "behold those who loved each other; who might have been indebted to you for their happiness; behold them rendered for ever miserable! and by you! All who belong to you, those whom you neither will nor can quit, will lay all their afflictions to your charge! Congratulate yourself!"

Helen threw herself into her sister's arms. Her sobs almost suffocated her; "In presence of thy

family," said she, "speak! do me the justice to say, that I never conceived any hope which could opugn the authority of my mother." Madame de Balançon, more dead than alive, alternately cast her eyes on her brother and Helen without being able to fix them on her husband. A detestable selfishness caused him to love no one but himself, and he remained alone in the midst of his family.

Ill at ease, wearied with the complaints of those about him, he chose to assume a tone of imperious authority in speaking to his wife. "Why be angry?" said she to him, "all here obey you. My sister will depart to-morrow, and with you

I shall remain submissive, though disconsolate, at the woes which I observe in those who are dear to me."

Madame de Balançon passed the night by the side of Helen. The presence of their women, occupied in preparations for the departure, which was to take place early in the morning, forced the two sisters to suppress their emotions. The bustle of these attendants, their quick and hurried speeches to each other, the orders which they had to ask, were very annoying to them. Who knows not how much misery dreads a noise ; how fondly it craves repose and silence !

At dawn the two sisters repaired

to the park; Monsieur de Varambon was waiting for them. He fell at their feet in a state of anguish which almost deprived him of reason. Helen was going away; no power could detain her! He took her hand and her sister's; he pressed them to his lips, to his heart, in a frightful agony of despair.

Madame de Balançon, solely occupied with their griefs, thought not of herself; it seemed as if she had postponed her own sufferings until the period when she should be able to do nothing more for their consolation. "Helen," said she to her brother, "will never forget us, — she will return, — my mother will restore her to my prayers." Mon-

sieur de Varambon heard her without looking at her, without answering her. Solely occupied with Mademoiselle de Tournon, he sought to ascertain how far she believed in the hopes which were held out to him. "Yes," said Helen to him, "I shall see you again, a secret voice assures me I shall!" — "Ah!" cried he, "will that despotic mother permit you to remember the wretched man whom she compels you to leave?" — "Never doubt my affection," rejoined Helen, her eyes suffused with tears. "I am forbidden to dispose of my hand, but I can retain my freedom. I have already told you — the veil or your name shall be my destiny."

Monsieur de Varambon, on his knees before her, answered only by exclamations of grief. "Oh! remember," said he, "the power you have over my soul. Those faults which sometimes alarmed you, did not a single look compel them to vanish? I became all that you would have me be! Before I knew you, I thought happiness an empty name; on seeing you, all the sentiments which give grace and value to life were infused into my soul. I live but for you! Ah! in pity forget me not; do not abandon me. If you knew how unhappy you can make me, perhaps you would tremble at your dominion over me!"

Helen was terrified by his despair;

for the first time she dared to press his hand between her own ; for the first time she named him “ Augustus, her dear Augustus ! ” She raised her eyes, as if calling Heaven to witness her oath, and said, “ In absence, increase not the torments which overpower you, say to yourself daily, ‘ She will belong to God or to me. ’ ” The heart of Monsieur de Varambon was lacerated. He shuddered to receive such a promise, and his lips had not power to reject it.

Though he still saw Mademoiselle de Tournon, he fancied she was already far away from him. It was only in thought that he seemed to himself to live. At a loss what token to give her, an unknown

power directed his eyes to the wedding ring of his mother, which he had always worn since he had lost her. He prized it as his life : he presented it to her. " I accept it," said she ; " a ring of death and mourning must be sacred."

Madame de Balançon, wishing to withdraw them from this horrible situation, said to her sister, " I see the woman who is to take you away ; if possible, do not let her witness your tears." Helen stretched forth her hand once more to Monsieur de Varanbon, and seizing her sister's arm, fled with a rapidity which shewed the pain she was inflicting on herself. She would not enter the chateau. After pressing Madame de Balançon



to her heart, she hurried into the carriage. The woman who was to accompany her, took her seat. Helen cast a mournful look toward the alley in the park where she had just left Mousieur de Varambon. She saw him running. To spare him too painful a separation, she said to her people, "Go on, go on," and shrouding herself from all eyes, she disappeared.

He arrived too late to bid a last adieu. He stretched forth his arms towards the swiftly-moving carriage, and remarked not the grief of Madame de Balançon. Approaching him, she said, "Come with me." — "No, no," cried he, "never more will I see my brother. But be assured

that I shall ever cherish the tenderest friendship for you : I transfer to you the attachment which I had vowed to my family. I will write to you ; answer me ; a letter from you will always soothe my sufferings. Judge whether I love you !" He departed instantly, without her being able to detain him.

Madame de Balançon, thus abandoned, felt for the first time the desolation in which she was now to exist. She stood weeping on the spot from whence she had seen all she loved disappear. She looked towards the road, and continued weeping. The voice of Monsieur de Balançon was heard. The fear of seeing him restored her strength ;

she took refuge in the chapel of the chateau. Kneeling before Heaven, she prayed for her brother, for Helen, for herself; she ventured to supplicate for fortitude; she arose mild and patient; if the weight of her chain still oppressed her, she had at least the resignation of a soul which has bidden adieu to happiness.

Mademoiselle de Tournon pursued her journey in a state of distraction, which she could not surmount. The woman who accompanied her, paid her all the attention of a respectful and considerate pity. Seeing her one day more dejected than usual, she ventured to say to her, "Do not constrain yourself, my young lady; it is very natural to weep on quitting

a sister by whom you are so beloved."

Helen regarded her with astonishment. Then it was not to the remembrance of Monsieur de Varambon that she attributed her regrets. What a solace to give way to her sorrow, and impute her tears to a motive which she was permitted to avow. She wept, and she was relieved, at least, from that oppression which impeded her respiration. But on the last day of their journey, the woman took the liberty to represent that she must recover her fortitude, as Madame de Tournon would be justly offended if she shewed more regret than joy on returning home. It cost Helen a great effort to appear

before her mother with a tranquil mien.

Madame de Tournon received her with the coldness and gravity which were habitual to her. Yet she was internally surprised and flattered by her beauty. Six months of absence, freedom, and perhaps also her first love, gave a new interest to her countenance. Her noble deportment was free from that embarrassment which her mother used to occasion in her before their separation. She regarded her daughter with a feeling of pride ; but she concealed it ; and the more she was pleased, the more austere she appeared.

A few minutes after Helen's arrival at the Louvre, where her mo-

ther resided; the doors of the apartment were hastily thrown open, and the queen of Navarre was announced. This princess frequently came to converse with Madame de Tournon, from whom she sought advice rather than consolation. Madame de Tournon gave that advice with the sternness peculiar to her character; but she faithfully kept the secrets entrusted to her.

Marguerite was so struck with the beauty of Helen, that she forgot the motive which had brought her thither. "I hope," said she, "that you will not withdraw this young person from all observation. I shall present her to the queen my mother." Seeing that the proposal was not agreeable

to Madame de Tournon, she added, " I shall thus give you a proof of the affection which I bear you." Marguerite was so insinuating when she wished to please, that she won all who were about her. Sometimes she succeeded even in gaining dominion over Madame de Tournon.

The princess was extremely affable to those she loved, but became disdainfully haughty toward them when they displeased her. The persons whom she distinguished were fascinated with her. Though trifling in her tastes, she was a faithful friend, and from her gaiety and careless air, few persons could suppose her susceptible of passions too strong for her reason. Neither was it suspected

that she was capable of designs that required serious attention. She was still young, and her gestures, her look, her smile, rendered her on the first interview irresistible. Helen regarded her with an admiration with which she was highly pleased.

Madame de Tournon told Marguerite, that she was resolved to keep her daughter in seclusion until her marriage. The very thought of a marriage, decreed by her mother, made Mademoiselle de Tournon tremble. Unsupported as she was, the queen seemed a protectress who might defend her : she cast on her a look that implored her pity.

“ I will not allow you,” said Marguerite, addressing Madame de



Tournon, "to rob me of your daughter, as you robbed me of her elder sister. She must embellish the court; she shall be near you when you accompany me. Don't you consent, young lady?" Helen replied in the affirmative most gratefully. Her mother darted on her a wrathful look, which did not escape the queen. "Be not angry," said she, "I do not mean to separate your daughter from you; but I wish her to know the world before her fate is decided, that she may enjoy the pleasures which belong to her age. You shall be witness to my conduct, and you will still be her guide. To-morrow I shall present Helen to my mother. Till then,

do not mention her arrival. I would enjoy the surprise which this new star will excite ; it may be foreseen even by inexperience that she will dazzle the whole court."

This hyperbolical language, so much in vogue at that time, did not tempt Madame de Tournon. She observed that it would require more than a day to arrange her daughter's dress, and prepare her for her presentation. Marguerite, ever hurried away by the impulse of the moment, allowed no obstacle to be thrown in the way of her wishes. The more reluctance Madame de Tournon manifested, the more absolute became the Queen's will. — "If your daughter's toilet gives you concern," said

she, " I will take charge of its arrangement. We are pretty nearly of equal height ; I shall send her a dress which I ordered for myself ; she shall wear my colours, and every thing about her shall bespeak her a favourite."

This was most certainly not the title which Madame de Tournon desired for her daughter, and Marguerite was much amused with the anger she was forced to suppress. Her uneasiness gave the Princess a secret satisfaction. She delighted to punish her for the disdainful pride with which she presumed to censure her pleasures. Helen was not very sorry to discover a way in which she might in some degree elude her mother's

authority. She was too innocent to see the danger of favouritism. Besides she was at an age when it is easy to imagine, that, with a spotless mind and pure intentions, the attacks of calumny and the faults of inexperience may be avoided.

The Queen of Navarre remained a long time. Ever anxious to see the Netherlands under the sovereignty of her cousin the Duke of Alençon, who had lately taken the title of Duke of Anjou, she wished to make Mademoiselle de Tournon speak of those provinces, which it concerned him much to know. She was astonished to learn that Helen had seldom visited beyond the domains of Monsieur de Balançon. —“ How

then did you pass your time in that solitude?" she enquired. "I enjoyed the country, Madame; a fine day was enough to content me." Marguerite was affected by this answer. — "A fine day satisfied you!" said she, thinking on herself with acute pain. — She, whose ample range of pleasures always created new desires, she to whom the agitated, the critical state of affairs allowed no relaxation, she who, amidst these festivities, these balls, seemed merely seeking amusement, was solely occupied in conducting political intrigues.

She viewed Helen with that eagle's eye which was peculiar to her, and which seemed eager to

penetrate the mind itself! She said to her hastily, "Was there, then, no one in that old chateau?" Madame de Tournon eagerly replied, that it was solely occupied by her son-in-law and her daughter. — "Then," exclaimed the Queen, "I can easily conceive that a brilliant sun might cheer the heart much more than a monotonous conversation. But let us revert to our plans for to-morrow. No one must know that Helen is to appear at the festival which my mother is to give to the King. I undertake to obtain, an instant beforehand, permission to take her with me. She shall attend me as part of my household; and I shall name her in so low a tone,

that I shall be sure to enjoy the astonishment, and especially the admiration which she will excite."

In the court of Catherine, nothing was permanent; not even etiquette. She was respected only so far as she did not interrupt state affairs, or disturb any of the arrangements of life. Marguerite well knew that her mother was pleased with what astonished her; and that she would be satisfied if her son were amused. It was a service to her to occasion a moment of interest or curiosity to a prince who was weary of every thing.

After remaining a few minutes longer, Marguerite went away. Madame de Tournon then said to her

daughter angrily, " Could you not have replied that your journey had fatigued you ? Could you not have said, once for all, that you detested the world and its tumultuous assemblies ? " — " How can we hate what we know not ? " replied Helen ; " the Queen of Navarre overwhelmed me with kindnesses ; I was grateful for them. " — " Well, then, learn that for the future you must ascertain from my eye, what pleases or offends me, ere you accept or refuse any proposals which she may make to you. A frigid deportment will soon weaken her eagerness ; besides, that is a deportment which will not retard a husband, and in this court I prefer it to triumphs which might make



you blush." — "But, Madam," replied Helen, in a low and timid voice, "why not quit this court, which is so odious to you." At these words Madame de Tournon could not keep her temper. Helen's silence redoubled her anger. Happily a page came to say that the Queen wished to see her for a moment. She was therefore obliged to leave her daughter, who had at least an opportunity of reverting to those happy days which she had passed at her sister's. — "What a contrast!" thought she; "why cannot Monsieur de Varambon see me at this moment? He would pity my situation. One of his looks which

seemed to lament me, would console me."

Marguerite, in sending for Madame de Tournon, merely wanted to withdraw her from her apartment. The moment she had quitted it, two of the Queen's women brought Helen a dress of Spanish orange-coloured velvet, embroidered with gold, a ruff, large ornamented sleeves, and a head-dress of the same colour, adorned with plumes and pearls. These women told Mademoiselle de Tournon that they had orders to try on the dress, and adjust it, if necessary, that she might be perfectly prepared for to-morrow. Helen, suffused with tears, suffered herself to be adorned like a victim

for sacrifice. Greatly would she have preferred being left alone to her recollections and her fears.

The Queen of Navarre could not detain long Madame de Tournon, who was too eager to see her daughter again. Though she fondly loved her, she wished through terror to regain the empire of which absence had deprived her. What was the surprise of that haughty woman on seeing Helen resplendent with gold and pearls. Not even her air of indifference could soften her ; the presence of the Queen's women imposed on her some restraint ; but she could not wait their departure ; and approaching her daughter, as if to examine her head-dress, she said to

her furiously, "I think this is a contrivance ; but we shall see who will get the better."

Whenever Marguerite had formed a project, however frivolous, she pursued it with a pertinacity which nothing could disturb. Next day her first thought was of Mademoiselle de Tournon. She sent for her several hours before the ball, and amused herself with attending to her toilette. Her own hair-dressers, her women, her embroiderers, were all employed to adorn her. Helen considered so much kindness a proof that the Queen of Navarre delighted to make every one happy about her.

When the ball was about to begin, Marguerite waited on the Queen

mother, followed by Madame de Tournon, Helen, and a great number of beautiful and brilliant ladies. Mademoiselle de Tournon eclipsed them all; and, as Marguerite had foreseen, she became the object of general curiosity and admiration. Catherine received her with particular kindness; even the King spoke some obliging words to her.

The Duke de Guise came to lead her out to dance. In the middle of the ball-room, illuminated by thousands of lights, she attracted all eyes towards her. She appeared like some celestial being; the spectators drew near to behold her; and murmurs of delighted admiration were heard on all sides. Her modest air,

her youth, affected all hearts, as her beauty fixed the gaze of every one.

No person admired her more than Monsieur de Souvré. As soon as she had finished dancing, he approached her with an earnestness which was remarked by the queen of Navarre. His post of Master of the Wardrobe, his credit with the king, his weight with the public, rendered him so respectable a man, that her Majesty was truly gratified to see him take notice of Helen.

Monsieur de Souvré was a favourite of Henry III. whom he had attended in Poland; but the public opinion had never included him among those who were reproached for the conduct of that prince. The

king was pleased at seeing him ; spoke to him of state affairs without reserve, and took his advice as the result of real attachment and tried loyalty. Often had he tried to reclaim that prince from the loose and effeminate life which lost him the love of his people. Unsuccessful in that, he, by his dejected mien, accused without offending him. The king knew that this faithful subject, though he might inwardly blame, would always speak so as to cause him to be respected ; and that his sword would be ever ready to defend him. Hence he was consulted on important affairs ; was appealed to amidst the many troubles which environed the throne ; he enjoyed the

respect produced by avowed favour and merited esteem.

This favourite of so unusual a character had an exalted sensibility which rendered it difficult for him to be happy. It was his wish that the woman, who should consent to unite her lot with his, should be willing to go with him into the country, where he hoped one day to establish himself. His heart was virtuous; his tastes were simple; and solitude gave him a glimpse of happiness, which courts are far from affording. In the reveries of a tender mind, he wished that she to whom he might devote himself, should be endowed with an union of all opposite qualities. He would



have innocence, so far enlightened as to despise the world, and experience, which had been so secluded from it, as to know nothing of its dangers.

Haunted by these ideas, which constituted the charm and torment of his life, he was sighing for perfection which he had never met with, when Helen appeared before his eyes. Her beauty, her timidity, her uncontrollable melancholy, caused by the regret of those whom she had quitted, gave Monsieur de Souvré an indefinable emotion. He stood as if struck by one of those enchantments which decide on all futurity.

Marguerite had observed all his movements and guessed all his

thoughts without appearing to observe him. She immediately conceived the probability of making this nascent passion contribute to the success of a project with which she had been long occupied.

The queen of Navarre really detested Henry III., and could not forget that he had just occasioned her to tremble for the duke of Anjou, whom alone she cherished. She ever imagined, that the safety of this beloved brother was compromised, and that he would never be happy while he remained in France. She, therefore, eagerly welcomed the complaints of the malcontent Flemings. She maintained a correspondence in their

country. She knew that a great number of them invoked this prince to aid them in shaking off the Spanish yoke ; but that he had resolved not to head them until his brother should give him succours in men and money. These succours Marguerite could not but know it was difficult to obtain ; the treasury was exhausted ; the king was jealous of his brother ; yet she did not despair of inducing Catherine to consent, that the last of her sons should become sovereign of the Netherlands.

Sometimes she tried to awaken her maternal tenderness ; but more frequently she worked on her credulous and superstitious mind, and would ask whether it were true, that

a soothsayer had predicted, that all her children should wear crowns : — Catherine, absorbed in the reveries of astrology, never failed to answer by repeating that prediction with great complacency. Marguerite caused her to repeat it in detail, and listened with the attention of a mind predisposed to believe. Thus, under the pretext of ascertaining the prophecy thoroughly, she strongly impressed it on her mother's memory. This the queen of Navarre called "sowing grain." When she left Catherine musing, she flattered herself with the hope of some fortunate decision in favour of her brother.

In truth, the duke of Anjou

would not bear the title of king ; but he would be sovereign of a country, rich and powerful enough to satisfy the ambition of Catherine. The queen of Navarre was persuaded that Monsieur de Souvré, so proud of the French name, would be in favour of this project, that he would induce the king to wish that a French prince should be master of a country, on which his house had claims of ancient date. She saw that the weaknesses of her mother and the virtues of Monsieur de Souvré would alike be servicable to the interests of the duke of Anjou.

Entertaining this opinion, she was aware of the importance of attaching to herself Monsieur de Souvré, and she was therefore glad to observe

his recent emotion. She hoped, that he would be attracted more frequently to her circle, by the desire of meeting Helen; and that this first impression, which had been so lively, would soon generate a real attachment. She spoke of it to Madame de Tournon, assuring her that she should favour with all her influence a marriage so desirable. But she explained to her, why no one ought to be aware of their intention at least, until Monsieur de Souvré was better acquainted with his own sentiments.

The king's hatred of his sister equalled that which she bore to him, and his sovereign power rendered its effects more to be dreaded. The

cruelty of this prince is, unhappily, well-known. But his weakness was readily alarmed at the consequences which might possibly result from his fits of passion. He then hastened to treat with those whose ruin, in his imprudence, he had vehemently wished for, and who had been fortunate enough to escape him. Hence, on learning the clandestine departure of his brother, he had at first commanded the duke de Montpensier to bring him back "dead or alive;" and after keeping Marguerite a prisoner at the Louvre for several months, he had applied to that princess to reconcile him with the duke of Anjou.

She had succeeded; and the king had just ratified the peace which his

mother had signed. He pretended to avow repeatedly that he owed it to the intervention of Marguerite. Perhaps he hoped that these expressions of false gratitude would reach the hearts of the Calvinists, that they would regard her no longer as a queen of Navarre, but as a sister of the Valois. By rendering her obnoxious to the suspicions of the reformers, he might destroy the influence which she had gained by her wit and address. In times of civil discord, an enemy's praises are more dangerous than his accusations, from the distrust to which they give rise. They create wonder, they excite offensive reserve, and at length set at variance those whose importance depended solely on their union.



Henry III. celebrated the peace by public rejoicings ; but while he appeared wholly occupied with his amusements, his ear continued open to the disclosures of spies, and his heart disposed to vengeance. He considered death as a prompt and sure way to rid himself of persons who caused themselves to be feared.

Death was at that time the ordinary expedient in difficult cases. It appeased the vengeance of husbands, the jealousy of lovers ; it weeded out the ambitious ; it was an opening made for the purpose of gaining rank, station, and fortune. He who succeeded not in procuring the assassination of his enemy or his competitor, engaged him in one of those mortal duels, in which frequently

both parties fell. There was no gradation between death and the slightest offence given or received. The sovereign himself had no other punishment to inflict than death. Disgrace was productive of no shame; many even considered it an honour. Exile was impossible in times when those who fled from the court could find any where a town ready to open to them its gates, and soldiers disposed to serve them. At the Louvre there were imperious courtiers; among the rebels, sanguinary chiefs; and the bewildered people no longer knew whom to love, whom to fear, or whom to hate.

Amidst these ills and troubles, Catherine gave every day new entertainments to amuse the indolence

of the king, and gratify her own ambition of governing him. The evenings often closed with a ball or concert. It was at her apartments that the royal family met. Thus the king seeing her daily, retained the habit of opening his mind to her on every thing, and she continued to be the central spring of business and pleasures.

Her magnificence exceeded the most brilliant dreams of imagination. Helen therefore was dazzled on entering her apartment. The flowers, the perfumes, the glare of the lights, the dresses sparkling with gold and diamonds, that assemblage of the most eminent and polished men, and of women whose illus-

trious names recalled a thousand recollections of historical renown, and whose beauty seemed their only pretension, filled Helen with astonishment. Her young mind saw no deeper than the surface. She remarked with surprise that in this court all looks appeared obliging, all expressions teemed with goodwill. In her purity of soul, she could not suspect that, under such gentle regards, such flattering words, were almost always concealed some perfidious designs. She thought that Monsieur de Varambon would assuredly relax his severity if he could judge for himself of this fairy land, against which he was so strongly prejudiced.

Marguerite paid assiduous court to her mother. Madame and Mademoiselle de Tournon attended her. Monsieur de Souvré, attached by his office to the person of the king, was also most frequently at the circles of Catherine. He never failed to approach Helen, and he remained near her without the power to remove.

Mademoiselle de Tournon, accustomed to hear his virtues extolled, his extensive intelligence and his wisdom in council admired, believed him incapable of weakness or error. The king and the queen treated him with a regard which shewed their profound esteem. Amidst this gay and gallant court, Monsieur

de Souvré seemed to her a being of a distinct order. She felt pleased that he sometimes took an interest in her youth, and undertook to guide her inexperience. Though he was amiable and still very young, the idea that she might inspire him with too tender an attachment never presented itself to her mind. Hence without reflection, without design, a thousand little affinities of confidence and friendship were formed between them. He acquainted her with the usages of a difficult court. Helen's eye consulted him in all her perplexities. She could not forego the recollection of Monsieur de Varambon, but the attention, the gentleness, the indulgence of Mon-

sieur de Souvré became a consolation to her. On entering the saloon of Catherine, her first look was cast on him.

There was no strict, jealous, but useful friend, to caution her, that the slightest imprudence would be discerned, and construed, by women light in their conduct, and quick in their suspicions. The pure heart of Helen was a stranger to reserve or distrust. Monsieur de Souvré, who saw her shrinking from praise, indifferent to admiration, and never easy and tranquil, except with him, was touched by the artless indications of preference of which she was scarcely conscious, but which made him happy. Innocence and youth often

make flattering distinctions un-  
awares ; theirs is still the kindly  
and fugitive smile of infancy.

Madame de Tournon remarked,  
with secret exultation, Monsieur de  
Souvré's attachment to her daugh-  
ter. He possessed all the advantages  
which could flatter the ambition of  
a mother ; but he declared not his  
intentions, and she concealed her  
hopes. Yet, well aware of the senti-  
ments which he felt, and determined  
that there should be neither obstacle  
nor delay on the part of her daugh-  
ter, she expected, through the ex-  
citement of fear, to prevent all  
resistance. Her authority became  
daily more rigorous. Helen spoke  
not a word which her mother did not



take occasion to reprove; took not a step which she did not censure as either improper or ridiculous.

The imperious disposition of Madame de Tournon had always displeased Monsieur de Souvré. Yet after her daughter's return, he passed at her house all the time which his duties left at his disposal. He often remarked that Helen had been weeping. He would then stand near the small table where she was at work, and endeavour to ascertain the cause of her affliction.

It was customary with Mademoiselle de Tournon to keep aloof from the circle of her mother's visitors. Fixing her eyes on her work, her thoughts wandered to the park where

she had so often walked with Monsieur de Varambon; and she pictured him in her imagination as unquiet and miserable as she was herself. Astonished at the silence of her sister, she conjectured that her mother had intercepted her letters. Surely she must have spoken of Augustus! Was she then doomed never to hear from them? And her tears would flow unconsciously.— How often Monsieur de Souvré witnessed these fits of sorrow! He ascribed them to the severity of Madame de Tournon, and would place himself between them, so as to assist Helen in concealing her tears from her mother.

These tender and watchful atten-

tions were not unobserved by Mademoiselle de Tournon. His manner was so mild; it inspired her with so much confidence, that, if he knew not her secrets, it was because she had had no opportunity of disclosing them to him, for they were never seen alone.

One evening, however, when Madame de Tournon was called into an adjoining room, Monsieur de Souvré said to Helen, "There are moments when a real friend might, perhaps, be a consolation?" — "Oh!" cried she, "speak not to me of friendship; my heart would break; were I to say a word, I should weep, without being able to control myself!" — "How," replied Monsieur de

Souvré, “ are you so wretched that complaint and tears are forbidden you?” — “ My mother is returning,” said she, trembling, “ let me not be overpowered with these emotions.” Unable to suppress them, she hastened away to her own apartment.

He felt penetrated with a passion so tender, that from this moment all his hesitation was at an end. But it was from her alone that he would obtain permission to demand her hand. A delicious joy animated him ; he hoped that those eyes, which had so often wept, would one day beam on him with love and confidence.

On returning, Madame de Tour-

non was surprised at not seeing Helen, and said, harshly, "Where is my daughter?"—This strong and piercing voice roused while it shocked him. He looked at her in such astonishment, that she felt how ridiculous her ill-humour appeared.

Monsieur de Souvré, now present with Madame de Tournon alone, was somewhat at a loss to maintain the conversation. 'All at once he said to her, "I am a singular man! I would not resign myself to an unequal union; and I could not endure what is called a convenient marriage. My heart would require to be assured of the affection of a young person, ere I should venture to avow my sentiments to her, and

especially ere her family interfered with the view of influencing her choice." — "Think you," said Madame de Tournon dryly, "that a family which respected itself, would permit a man to come and devote his assiduities to a young person, unless his intentions were declared?" — "Accordingly, Madam. I have formed no engagement hitherto; and it is probable that I never shall, unless I meet with an amiable indulgence, which may favour the dreams of my imagination."

His mind was occupied with the remembrance of Helen, and he described her without choosing to speak of her. He required illustrious birth, and a sweetness of dispo-

sition, which should promise him the happiness consistent with all the stages of human life. Madame de Tournon was about to interrupt him, when he hastened to add, "I wish, in marrying, to foresee a long course of happy years ; to be assured that my old age will be soothed with tender cares ; but I desire, also, that love may embellish what remains of my youth ; for, Madam, I am more than thirty ; and if young persons do not actually believe me old, they do not consider me one of themselves."

"I do not suppose," replied Madame de Tournon, "that you would find a single mother, endowed with some share of prudence, who would

calmly wait until your heart was fixed." "I know not whether that prudent mother will deign to hear me; but I do know that I should be for ever miserable, if I thought I was indebted to her authority for her daughter's consent."

Madame de Tournon looked thoughtful; he remained apparently absorbed in reflection. They were long silent; and the more the silence was protracted, the more difficult it became to break. At length Monsieur de Souvré exclaimed, "I am sure you must think me very ridiculous." "No, but selfish, as all men are." "As to selfishness, I did not expect to be accused of it; I who would sacrifice my life to . . ." He was



about to name Helen, but he checked himself, and hastily added, "Would you deign, Madam, to explain why you impute to me that contemptible failing?"

"Because, after having been admitted to the intimacy of a credulous mother, after you had sought to obtain the affections of a young heart which knew not itself, and after your attentions had excited public notice, you would probably estrange yourself at the first word that seemed to derange your beautiful system. Are you ignorant, Sir, that the public, which meddles in every thing, equally blames both families when a marriage, supposed to have been fixed, comes to be broken off."

“ Ah! Madam,” said he, “ you little know me, or I have explained myself ill! I would wish to find a mother of sufficient tenderness to be willingly a friend to me and her daughter. Then, submitting in the first instance, I would make her the arbiter of my fate. Is it a very culpable repugnance to dislike those marriages which take place between two persons scarcely known to each other, whose parents alone determine the union. Should not, Madam, some time be allowed in which we might seek to please, and acquire the hope that we were beloved? I would have her, who should deign to give me her hand, feel assured that my disposition was such as would render

her happy. In short, I would wish to obtain from herself her consent, or to hear her refusal from her own lips.” “Then you would forbid a mother to interpose the advice of enlightened experience?” “No, Madam; but your severity would alarm me.” “Ah!” said she haughtily, “and what has my severity to do with the general reflections of your indecisive mind?”

Monsieur de Souvré was again silent. He would have given much that a third person might have come to interrupt a discussion into which he had entered without foreseeing it, and much more without intending it. Madame de Tournon enjoyed his embarrassment. Offended at his

presuming, in some degree, to attack her power, by seeking to please her daughter, instead of owing her to her mother's will, she determined not to say a word which might encourage him to explain himself more frankly. He suffered, he was agitated, and she regarded him with a stern and frigid look, which repelled his confidence.

After long hesitating whether to speak or be silent, he said, "How shall I hazard the avowal, Madam, of a sensibility perhaps too apprehensive! but had I ventured to declare my sentiments to Mademoiselle de Tournon, and on returning to see her, had found her in tears; had I been led to think that she had been

in tears all the time of my absence, perhaps I should have been so unjust as to conclude that force had been used to make her mine; in that case, I should be the most miserable of men; and I confess to you, I should fly to the end of the earth."

"Then it is my daughter, Sir, who is the object of our singular interview?" "You know that well, Madam." "Yes, Sir, for I am more sincere than you chose to be, and this is my answer; I never will consent that a man shall declare his sentiments to my daughter before I have authorised her to hear them. If you do not promise me, on your honour, to avoid saying a single word which may relate to love, I shall be obliged,

though with regret, to decline seeing you. But if you content yourself with endeavouring to please her, if you limit yourself to the incitement of a preference, which you deserve, and which I am ready to agree will meet my approbation, I consent to receive you as usual."

Monsieur de Souvré reflected on these astonishing proposals. "How! Madam, not a word which might lead her to think that I wish to dedicate my life to her?" "No, Sir; be with her as a brother, as an attentive friend; or, if you pretend to her hand, let it be according to the forms in use among us: in short, a marriage proposed by a third person, whose family inquires whether it be

convenient, a marriage concluded as soon as it is approved of. Yet, should your incredible and uncommon modesty lead you to think that you will require a long time to satisfy yourself with the certainty of being beloved, I am ready to consent to those delicacies which appear to me at least useless. Farther, I am also free to tell you, that you are the only man towards whom I would exercise a similar condescension. I thus give you a sufficiently strong proof of my perfect esteem."

The frigid and dry manner of Madame de Tournon, her look of imperturbable indifference, froze the heart of Monsieur de Souvré. "Pardonnez-moi, Madam," said he, "but I

cannot dissemble what I feel; you make me shudder as if you announced to me a misfortune. Is it thus that the hope of obtaining the hand of Mademoiselle de Tournon is to be created in my heart?" "I did not know, Sir, that you were of so romantic a spirit: and I am more astonished at it than you can imagine. But to-morrow, at an early hour, I am to be with the queen of Navarre; allow me to retire."

"One word more, Madam: will you pardon the anxiety of a heart which ventures to implore you not to speak to Mademoiselle de Tournon of the interview you have now granted me? Let her not know, Madam, that I dare aspire to her



hand. "Let me, in short, be able to see her again without causing her any embarrassment, and let her continue to speak to me without constraint." "I am willing to pay this deference also to delicacies and subtleties of sensibility, which, however, I do not approve; but I must, at the same time, repeat, Sir, that if your assiduities awake the attention of the public, we must meet no more."

At these words she rose, and took leave of Monsieur de Souvré, who had not courage to add another word, though he felt conscious that he had said nothing of what he should have said, and that at all events he had not said half of what he had to say. On going away, he reflected on that

stern temper which nothing could move. "It may be reason," said he, "but I should have preferred a little weakness."

Madame de Tournon was also busied with her reflections. She wished above all things to unite her daughter to Monsieur de Souvré. She resolved to communicate this conversation to the queen of Navarre, who had been the first to suggest to her the idea of this marriage.

When Monsieur de Souvré again saw Mademoiselle de Tournon, he attentively observed her countenance, and her slightest movements. Helen's simple and natural air, her mild and tranquil look, proved to him that the hopes which he had ven-

tured to conceive were still unknown to her. He resumed his ease and confidence, and never had he felt more happy.

“ Yet she was sad and thoughtful; her mind was occupied with her sister and Monsieur de Varambon. The magnificence of Catherine’s court had not long continued to dazzle her. She was weary of observing that false gaiety which so often screened the deepest grief. That agitation which left no time either to regret the absence of friends, or devote a moment to self-examination, was to her insupportable. In a short time she almost ceased to bestow attention on any one except Monsieur de Souvré.

One day, when Marguerite retired into her cabinet to converse with Madame de Tournon, Helen remained in the saloon to await their return. Monsieur de Souvré arrived; and happy to find her alone, he approached her, and gently complained of the indifference with which she seemed to regard every thing. "Then you are not aware that I do not live here?" said she, with a mournful smile; "I exist only with my sister; there I was so happy!" "I do not well comprehend," said he, with an afflicted air, "how any recollection, however dear, can prevent a slight interest being accorded to friends who are present. In short, pray explain to me those words,

*I do not live here?"* "Ah!" said she, "I will initiate you in the mysteries of that internal existence which has so profound a charm. For example, the hour which marks the time when your duties and your pleasures await you, is to me the hour when I recollect the sweet occupations in which the days were passed at my sister's. My mother orders me to attend her to a ball; then my person seems to move or to stand in the dance without my interference; my mind is at my sister's small table, where I used to draw every evening. Do you understand my thoughts now?" "Too well; and I see that no one here obtains from you the slightest attention." "That is an exaggeration,"

said Helen, in a gentle but rather absent manner; "on your part it is even unjust; if I met not you in company, I should often go away without having spoken to any body."

These flattering words were spoken with an air so tranquil and unthinking, that they distressed Monsieur de Souvré. How would he have preferred silence, and even ill-humour, provided he had been its direct object. He was ready to exclaim, "Are you thinking of me? Is it to me you are speaking?" Yet, weak as every one really in love usually is, he dared not complain, and replied, "If you deigned to honour my devotion with a little esteem, could not you confide to me what so frequently

causes your tears? They afflict me when I see them, and their remembrance pursues me when I am no longer near you."

"I was educated along with my sister; she is my earliest friend. I went with her when she quitted France; I was the object of her tenderest care, of her warmest affection; and since they separated me from her, I have learnt nothing concerning her." "Does she not write to you?" "Perhaps you will blame me, but I cannot help thinking that my mother does not give me her letters." "Why that rigorous severity? Can there be any human sentiment so touching as the affection of two sisters?" "When I returned

home, to my mother, my regrets seemed to offend her. She ridiculed my impassioned friendship; my sorrow provoked her laughter; and I am no longer allowed to make inquiries after my poor sister; at least, when I attempt to speak of her, my mother looks so dissatisfied, that I dare not say another word. Ah! I should be consoled if I only knew that she was well, and could tell her that I never forget her for an instant."

Monsieur de Souvré was strongly tempted to propose that Mademoiselle de Tournon should write to her sister, and to assure her that he would undertake the transmission of the letter. But was it for him to



induce a young person to conceal any thing from her mother! No; he would not be so weak; yet he would gladly console Helen.

When he returned home, he adhered to his resolution of not leading her into any course of proceeding which should be unknown to her mother. After much deliberation, he conceived the idea of writing to Madame de Balançon. He had become acquainted with her at the Louvre at the time of her marriage; his office had several times afforded him an opportunity of obliging Monsieur de Balançon. He persuaded himself that she would feel thankful to him for informing her of the disquietude which tormented her sister.

He mused a long time on the means of giving this letter a cast so simple and natural, as not to surprise Madame de Balançon; but he was so deeply interested in Helen, that he exposed himself in every line.

“ Having the pleasure,” said he, “ of sometimes seeing Mademoiselle de Tournon, I witness the unceasing regrets which she bestows on her sister.” How blind are the passions! Monsieur de Souvré’s delicacy prompts him merely to say he sees Helen *sometimes*; and yet does not this very letter prove her confidence in him, and the feelings with which she has inspired him? Imprudent man! not to perceive the incon-

sistency of such a proceeding! and you know not moreover what a heart you are about to lacerate. He continued to acquaint Madame de Balançon with the grief of her sister. "Mademoiselle de Tournon is deeply afflicted that she never hears from you. She is afraid that her mother, somewhat touched with that maternal jealousy which often torments the most reasonable parents, may have withheld your letters from her. Can you refuse me, Madam, the happiness of reviving Mademoiselle de Tournon! She solely desires to know that you are well, and to assure you that she can never forget you. I shall find means to convey to your sister those

consoling words, for her mother knows not that she has deigned to speak to me of a disquietude so natural and so serious,

“ Will you, Madam, pardon a man, whom you perhaps no longer remember, for venturing to address you with so much confidence. In my inmost heart there is a hope which might serve as my excuse, but silence is imposed on me. I am, therefore, condemned, Madam, merely to tell you that no one feels toward all that belongs to you, a purer attachment or a more profound respect. SOUVRE’.”

Madame de Balançon received this letter in presence of her hus-

hand, and, as is customary with many persons, she deliberated long ere she opened it. She was astonished at seeing an unknown hand, and the impress of France. She examined the seal. Her surprise excited the curiosity of Monsieur de Balançon. He approached his wife, who was obliged to read aloud Monsieur de Souvré's letter.

After listening attentively, Monsieur de Balançon took it and perused it himself, pausing at each sentence. "Nothing can be clearer;" cried he, "it is a marriage already arranged. I shall be delighted to announce it to my brother." "Could you be so cruel!" "O! far from it! Better humour

his madness! But no, no, I shall myself acquaint him with his good fortune," and he took the letter, picking up also the envelope which she had thrown away on breaking the seal, and which was inscribed with her name. "All this will reach my very sensitive brother at once," he exclaimed with a laugh of gratified malice.

On quitting his sister-in-law, Monsieur de Varambon had retired to a small estate which belonged to him. There in solitude he gave himself up to the deepest melancholy, and became daily more splenetic. The injustice of his relatives, that first mistake respecting their attachment, caused him to despise mankind, and

even to doubt of Helen : then he detested life itself. “ Will she still love me ? ” said he, in his rambles, in his retirement, day and night, at every hour. “ She has told me she would belong to heaven or to me — but her mother, — and absence ! ”

In calmer moments he believed in the fidelity of her affection, and hoped she might be able to soften her mother’s disposition, as well as resist the illusions of a dissipated and dangerous court. Then he arranged his domestic establishment, and collected all the objects which he knew would please her. It was with great earnestness and joy that he formed a place in the garden like that which she had chosen in her

sister's park, — the place where she had called him her own. While engaged in this labour, he anticipated her surprise, and he was happy.

On renouncing the ecclesiastical profession, he hastened to inform his family that he had for many years meditated that step. What pleasure he took in impressing this intelligence on every one, and especially on Helen! His jealous love would have been too apprehensive of the gratitude of its object, had she been capable of believing that it had cost him a great sacrifice.

Immediately after quitting the chateau of Monsieur de Balançon, he had written to Don Juan to re-



mind him of the favour which he had promised him. He desired it solely that he might offer to Mademoiselle de Tournon a more respectable establishment than he was actually qualified to give her. His ardent mind was so quickly susceptible of the most opposite impressions, that sometimes he regarded mediocrity as a happiness, if Helen, for his sake, chose to be contented with it ; and at other times, no fortune was brilliant enough to satisfy him, when he thought of her being indebted to him daily for new enjoyments.

He was expecting the answer of Don Juan, when a sealed packet was put into his hands, which he

eagerly opened. What were his feelings on finding Monsieur de Souvré's letter, with a line from his brother in these terms, "Judge of others and of yourself!"

Monsieur de Varambon stood over this letter as if stupefied. He contemplated it without believing his own eyes. This then was she whom he adored! — with what agony of heart he learnt that Monsieur de Souvré frequently saw Mademoiselle de Tournon! that she spoke to him of her griefs! and in secret! and unknown to her mother! Surely he must possess all her affection, since she, so gentle, so timid, allowed herself this mysterious, this

censurable confidence. Twenty times did he, with a shudder, read these words, " Her mother knows not that she has deigned to speak to me of a disquietude so natural and so serious." He doubted no longer the perfidy of Helen ; and his pain vented itself in cries, which he heard not ; in tears, which he felt not. He exclaimed with fury, " What then are the hopes which this presumptuous man dares not avow ?"

Wretched de Varambon ! how he scrutinized into all that could afflict him ! while the thought that, perhaps, this letter was not authorised by Helen, and that she might possibly be ignorant of that secret hope, did not

once occur to him! He suffered; he despaired.

His agitation having driven him into the garden, he overthrew the bench which resembled that on which he had received the promise of Helen; there he stood terrified, for he himself had destroyed a sacred token of remembrance! — Surely she will not come! she will never come! — and he fell down exhausted with agony.

David, an old domestic, who had attended him in his infancy, knew that he was unhappy. Though simple and artless, he had too long studied his master not to perceive his trouble, and, whenever he saw him more afflicted than usual, he suf-

ferred no other person to approach him. At this moment he came to seek for him, and found him powerless through grief, which had drained all his tears. He announced the arrival of an officer from Don Juan, and delivered a letter which he had brought.

The prince renewed his promises, representing to him, however, the magnitude of the sacrifice he was about to make. — Monsieur de Varambon thought of this for the first time, but it was because the wrongs he ascribed to Helen were thus aggravated. He imputed as a crime to her, the love which he felt, and the misfortune which threatened him. How had she requited his tenderness! how requited him who

aspired only to sacrifice his life for her! If he turned his thoughts to all the advantages he had rejected, it was because for her sake he had lost them.

David, however, ventured to remind him, that the person sent by Don Juan was waiting. Monsieur de Varambon, obliged to go to him, knew not how to conceal his agitation. The officer stated, that the prince expected him without delay; that he was preparing for a journey, and desired to speak with him before he set out. Monsieur de Varambon, too wretched to endure the idea of seeing persons who were indifferent, refused; he urged a thousand insurmountable obstacles.

— The officer, anxious to execute the orders he had received, would listen to nothing; he exaggerated the anxiety of Don Juan, the need he had of a friend to confer with at the moment of his departure. — “A friend!” exclaimed Monsieur de Varambon, “do you know what friendship is? Learn that there is no one who loves me;” and he relapsed into his agony, ashamed at having so exposed himself.

After a painful effort at self-control, he articulated some excuses, and owned that he was overwhelmed in profound affliction. The man, thinking he was giving way, renewed his importunate entreaties. Monsieur de Varambon, stunned with the obstinacy of a zeal which

nothing could check, had no longer strength to resist ; and he consented to go, that he might no longer listen to, or be obliged to answer a voice which grated on his ear.

As soon as he arrived, Don Juan taking him aside, informed him confidentially, that a project, which had long occupied him, required that he should repair incognito to the court of France, and invited him to accompany him.—This proposal opened a new prospect. It would then be possible to see Helen again ! but it was not at court that he would seek her. He would go by himself, unknown to any one, find her out when alone, and reproach her at leisure for her perfidy.



Full of this project, he refused the offer, under pretence of business and ill health. This change of mind was so absolute that Don Juan ceased to press him.

The prince, however, was particularly interested in being accompanied by one of the brothers-in-law

Madame de Balançon. He hoped that her mother, from her office, might be useful to him, and that perhaps he might, without her suspecting it, gain, through her means, some knowledge of the secret springs of a court abounding in intrigues. After mature consideration, he told Monsieur de Varambon, that he would take with him his brother Leopold; adding that

this youth, who had just entered the service, would doubtless be charmed with the journey.

Here was another disquietude for Monsieur de Varambon! His brother's presence in Paris might lead to the discovery of himself. Where was he to find a retreat! what would become of him in those hours of suffering which he might endure, ere he could speak with Mademoiselle de Tournon? every thing contributed to torture him!

Don Juan was occupied several days in preparing for his journey. Monsieur de Varambon, obliged to remain with him until his departure, could scarcely bear the impatience which devoured him. On entering

his carriage he received a letter from Madame de Balançon. This excellent friend sought to weaken the impression, which Monsieur de Souvré's letter must have made on him. She bade him remark that there was nothing very clear in it, except Helen's grief, Madame de Tournon's intentions, and Monsieur de Souvré's hopes, of which her sister might well be ignorant.

The friendship of Madame de Balançon would omit nothing which might tend to console Monsieur de Varambon. She added, that it appeared to her quite a matter of course that her mother should wish to marry Helen to Monsieur de Souvré; but knowing his ex-

treme delicacy, she was quite sure that he would relinquish his hopes, as soon as he knew that her heart was engaged. The more to tranquillize her brother-in-law, she bestowed on Monsieur de Souvré the commendation he deserved. Ah ! little knew she of the passion of jealousy ! Instead of appeasing him, she increased his irritation.

While he was enduring all these agonies, Helen was incessantly thinking on him. Continually, even in her mother's presence, was her mind thus occupied. Her silence was remarked ; her eyes were scrutinized ; her words were peevishly interrupted ; all her movements were thwarted. It was only at night when she re-

tired to her apartment, that she could give full scope to her recollections. She gazed on the ring which Monsieur de Varambon had given her at parting; that ring which his mother had worn until death. Helen, too, vowed, that it should always be with her, and that no one, until her death, should deprive her of it. A sort of pious superstition induced her to hold it in her hands during her prayers. With what fervent tenderness did she invoke that mother, snatched away so young, to look down from heaven, and watch over the happiness of her son. After having written to Madame de Balançon, Monsieur de Souvré became more gay; he experienced the hap-

piness of having done an act which might, in some degree, restore tranquillity to Mademoiselle de Tournon ; there was an air of joy about him which made him appear still more amiable.

This change did not escape Madame de Tournon. She flattered herself that Monsieur de Souvré was beginning to find favour with her daughter, and that he would not be long in declaring himself. How much did she congratulate herself on her firmness, in having interrupted all communication between the two sisters. She thought that this absolute separation could alone have healed Helen's heart. — “ She has suffered, doubtless,” said she, “ but

that was necessary." In her proud satisfaction she asked herself who else would, like her, have been proof against pity? She haughtily cast her eyes around her, and exulted still more in having broken off a childish attachment, which appeared by far the more foolish, since a more estimable match had flattered her ambition. Yet could she forget, that, having in a manner promised her eldest daughter to consent to Helen's marriage with Monsieur de Varambon, she had contributed to maintain a passion, which was about to occasion wretchedness to two young persons, enamoured of each other, and now menaced with a dismal futurity!

Madame de Tournon's satisfaction inclined her to a little more indulgence; she treated her daughter with less severity, and was even pleased to occupy herself with her style of dress. Mademoiselle de Tournon enjoyed this season of calm, without discovering either in her heart or in her conduct, that she had merited the past rigour or the present kindness of her mother.

It was understood at the court of France, that Don Juan would speedily arrive, and that he intended to appear incognito. It was hence resolved, that there should be paid him sufficient honours to make him feel, that the incognito is only a transparent veil through which the



rank and the person are always recognised. There was a wish to prove to him, that the extraordinary magnificence was not forgotten, with which, during his government of the Milanese, he had received the king on his return from Poland.

Helen was delighted to see Don Juan again. She thought that, on meeting him at court, he would remember having seen her at the house of Monsieur de Balançon ; that perhaps he would even come to visit her. The hope of hearing from her sister, of leading the prince to speak of Monsieur de Varambon, occasioned in her a gladness which enhanced her attractions ; the smile was on her lips ; all was enchantment to her.

Hitherto she had shone as a distinguished beauty, but her gaiety rendered her charming, and she seemed another person.

The queen of Navarre was considerably embarrassed on finding herself in the presence of the prince against whom she was incessantly exciting the Flemings. She attended, however, to the selection of her attire with peculiar diligence. The reputation of Don Juan had something in it so marvellous, that his name alone, and the desire of being noticed by him, animated all the ladies: the agitation was general.

Catherine ordained festivities for all the days of his intended stay in Paris. The pomp of imposing cere-

monials, and all that could enhance the elegance and luxury of the courtly pleasures, were put in requisition. It was the hero of Spain, one of the greatest captains of his age, whom they were to entertain; and his incognito allowed the general enthusiasm to transgress the limits of etiquette. The king appointed Monsieur de Souvré to go and receive Don Juan, and to accompany him to court. The prince on seeing him could not but perceive, that his arrival was expected. He resolved at least to act with such prudence, as to leave every one in ignorance as to his projects.

Monsieur de Souvré could not sufficiently admire his fine, noble

and martial countenance. That politeness of a true warrior, that impassioned language, which gave brilliancy to all that he uttered; every thing about him was striking. The gentler deportment, and the insinuating manners of Monsieur de Souvré, formed a contrast in which he lost nothing. His unconstrained respect, which seemed voluntary; his praises void of adulation; in short, the habits imparted by high birth and exalted station, equally struck Don Juan; they felt for each other a reciprocal esteem.

The king and the queens received the prince with a regard the more flattering, because it seemed directed only to his person. He was almost daz-

zled with the beauty of Marguerite ; she had wished to enchant him, and she succeeded. He saw only her, and ceased not to admire her extreme resemblance to her sister, the unfortunate queen of Spain.

Madame and Mademoiselle de Tournon attended the queen of Navarre. Don Juan appeared charmed to see Helen ; he expressed his satisfaction so strongly, that Marguerite was astonished. Could the person she was pleased to distinguish, be devoted to the prince ? Would she become adverse to the interests of the duke of Anjou ? She seized a momentary opportunity, when he was at a distance, to say to Mademoiselle de Tournon ; “ You never

spoke to me of Don Juan; had I known that he had been ever admitted at the old chateau, I should not have so honestly pitied your solitude."

Helen, rather hurt at the dissatisfied and satirical tone of the queen of Navarre, replied, "Don Juan passed only twenty-four hours in that old castle, Madam; that time, perhaps, is long enough to prevent his being forgotten. But neither his presence, nor the remembrance of him, could have dissipated the weariness in which you supposed I lived at my sister's."

Monsieur de Souvré heard this answer; it restored to him a pleasing calm, for which he was grateful,

though he did not dare to tell her so. The joy testified by Don Juan on seeing Helen again, had painfully surprised him; his look, his words, were so animated, that each new impression seemed to occupy him entirely.

He eluded the attentions of the King, and the conversation of Catherine, to approach the queen of Navarre. Henry III., from a motive which none could penetrate, had for some time sought to say flattering things to his sister; he advanced to ask Don Juan whether Marguerite was not the finest ornament of his court? "The finest ornament of the world;" replied the

Prince ; “ Heaven created her in a moment of magnificence.”

Marguerite opened the ball with him, and the admiration with which she inspired him soon became the subject of conversation to the whole court. When he had led back the queen of Navarre to Catherine, all the spectators ranged themselves to afford room for a quadrille in honour of Don Juan. The greatest lords, the most beautiful ladies, dressed in the different costumes of the countries composing the Spanish monarchy, performed dances in character. Mademoiselle de Tournon appeared ; she wore a robe of white gauze, garnished with pearls of gold. A gold net confined her beautiful



hair; a long veil covered without concealing her, and hung down to her feet. Dressed as a priestess of the sun, she conducted the quadrille before Don Juan, and presented him a crown of laurel, intertwined with one of roses; they were united and tied together with a ribbon, on which was embroidered the motto "*Love and Glory.*" This phrase depicted the whole life of Don Juan. "Ah!" said he, "keep your crowns, for I dare not offer them to the fairest! so much happiness belongs not to me." In pronouncing these words, he threw on Marguerite one of those looks which reveal the inmost thoughts.

Some women, dressed in the Spanish costume, passed before him, imitat-

ing a warlike march. They led, by light chains, some dancers in Arabian dresses. The music played some heroic measures, and the voices of persons concealed, celebrated the victories which Don Juan had won over the Moors in Grenada. In short, the Prince beheld on every hand, allusions to the brilliant actions of his life.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.







